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THE
CRIME OF CREDULITY

BY

HERBERT N. CASSON,

AUTHOR OF "THE RED LIGHT."

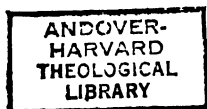


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PREFACE.

OURS is a midway civilization. It is a blending of old and new, faith and reason, reaction and progress. The political boss, the financial exploiter and the ecclesiastic walk side by side on our streets with the teacher, the inventor and the scientist. In the same building one group of people may be discussing the Roentgen rays or spinal anesthesia, while another group is listening to a trance lecture by a Spiritualist medium. Signor Marconi, the perfector of wireless telegraphy, and Kharifeh, the Egyptian palmist and astrologer, may reside in adjoining suites of the same hotel; and each have a large and enthusiastic following. In the same library you may find "The Riddle of the Universe," by

Haeckel ; and " Science and Health," by Mrs. Eddy. In the same mail-bag there may be a letter from Edison, announcing a new invention ; and a "consecrated" postcard from a faith-healer, designed to cure a case of chronic dyspepsia.

Just as there is in every human body a vermiform appendix,—a useless and dangerous remnant carried up from some lower stage of existence ; so there are in our immature civilization similar survivals of medievalism and even barbarism. These appendices may remain harmless and unnoticed for years ; but they may at any time cause intense pain and possibly death. Neither the physical nor the social body are safe as long as these tag-ends are allowed to exist in it ; and it is with the desire to prevent a threatened attack of national appendicitis that this book has been written.

The particular appendix which the

writer desires to have removed is known by the generic name of *Mysticism*; and the symptoms that have brought it into recent prominence have been the extraordinary growth of the Christian Science and Mental Science delusions. This recrudescence of medievalism calls for prompt action on the part of those who value common sense and scientific methods. Those who take for granted the freedom and advancement of the twentieth century, and are unaware of the desperate conflicts that were waged by scientists and thinkers to emancipate us from mystical superstitions, are being deceived by the new forms in which these superstitions are being revived. Credulity in all its mystical phases is a crime against social progress. It is impossible to perpetuate a civilization based on scepticism and the endeavors of human reason, if the credulity and devout faith of the Middle Ages be revived.

This book is, therefore, an attempt to draw the line sharply between rationalism and superstition. It is an attempt to point out and critically examine certain mystical tendencies which should have no place in our practical, level-headed American civilization. It is not meant to be read by those frail, non-committal people to whom a robust thought gives dyspepsia of the brain. If such an one buys it by accident, he had better exchange it for a year's subscription to some metaphysical monthly.

The conclusions of the writer have been reached, not only by a study of mystical books and magazines, but by an investigation of the effects of mysticism upon the mind and character, covering a period of eight years. Thus the charges that are made are all founded upon facts, and can be substantiated by a myriad of instances.

The thinkers and doers of this new

century are too busy to read large books ; and therefore, as it is for them that this book has been written, every proposition has been condensed into as few words as possible. There has been no attempt to either arouse or conciliate prejudice. No fact has been omitted merely because it is unpleasant to hear. No pretence has been made to answer the unanswerable, or to explain the universe.

In short, this book is but an outline of what an exhaustive work on this subject should be. Much is left to the reader. If any suggestion in its pages be the means of enlisting in the service of rationalism some writer of more ability and leisure, the purpose of the author will have been accomplished.

HERBERT N. CASSON.

New York City.



CHAPTER I.

THE PEDIGREE OF MYSTICISM.

IN every age and generation there are spasmodic movements, varying with the spirit of the times, which exhibit the power of mind over body in grotesque and irrational phenomena. These movements are never based upon reason, facts, statistics, or anything so commonplace ; but upon mysterious or supernatural powers, which the adherents of the sects are said to possess. They have a large and varied stock of "signs and wonders." They heal the sick by thought, or talk to the dead, or foretell events, or work miracles by prayer, or form partnerships with invisible beings, or slip in and out of their bodies, or do other remarkable and impossible things to

attract the attention of the public to themselves, and to obtain disciples.

These cults range from the lowest stages of fetichism and voodooism to the cultured seances of theosophists. They have as many names as the dictionary will allow. They appear in the highest civilizations as well as among primitive savages. But there are certain characteristics which are common to them all, by which they may be detected underneath their disguises.

First, these sects are invariably founded by some man or woman of more or less disordered intellect and magnetic personality. To be specific, they are organized by such unique enthusiasts as Mahomet, Bernard of Clairvaux, Paracelsus, Peter the Hermit, Ignatius Loyola, Swedenborg, General Booth, the Fox sisters, Blavatsky, Helen Wilmans and Mrs. Eddy.

Second, they are based upon visions,

trances, or some kind of "spiritual phenomena" which are unusual and impressive to the credulous mind.

Third, they are the result of disbelief in the prevailing religion, or a protest against its lukewarmness or rationalism. They appeal to those whose faith has been undermined by scepticism, and yet who shrink from the conclusions of reason.

Fourth, their mode of expression is determined by the scientific and intellectual thought of the times ; and thus gives a veneer of reasonableness to what would otherwise be instantly rejected.

And *Fifth*, they are ephemeral and barren, except when they are such as can be incorporated with the established superstition of the age, in which case they add greatly to its harmfulness and strength.

These cults are known at the present day under the names of Christian Science,

Mental Science, Salvation Army, Spiritualism, Astrology, and Theosophy, besides all manner of Buddhistic and occult societies. It will be seen that the above five characteristics are true of all these sects, however different they may regard themselves. They are undoubtedly survivals of medievalism,—shadows of the Dark Ages, obscuring and obstructing the path of social and intellectual progress.

All such movements are founded upon faith, not reason ; upon belief in some invisible world, not upon the desire to elevate thought and action among living men and women ; upon devotion and introspection, not science and knowledge. They differ from orthodoxy more in form than in spirit, in spite of their claims to progressiveness and utility. Frequently they are even more insidiously reactionary than Roman Catholicism, because the apparently liberal form in which their doctrines are cast deceive large numbers

of people who had almost passed beyond the reach of superstition.

India is the natural breeding-place of all these cults, and everyone of them can be traced back to that land of the mystics, via Europe and Asia Minor. Those that pretend to be philosophies rather than religions, borrow their metaphysical moonshine from the adepts and fakeers of the Himalayas.

The Greeks, who considered mysticism a mild species of insanity, had none of these sects. It is certain that if General Booth, or Ralph Waldo Trine, or Blavatsky had spoken on Mar's Hill, the Greeks would have given them quite as impatient a hearing as they gave to Paul's doctrine of the resurrection.

The *Sophist* was the nearest approach to the mystic that could grow in the sceptical atmosphere of Greece. Not that the Sophists were devout or credulous in any sense, for no more disintegrating

sceptics can be found in either ancient or modern history. Compared to them, even the Encyclopedists were constructive. But the Sophists, like the mystics, reveled in metaphysics, followed the paths of deduction into all manner of absurdities, and withdrew men's minds from the consideration of those scientific and practical subjects upon which human progress depends.

Like the Mental Scientist and Christian Scientist of to-day, the Sophist used logic to overthrow reason, to develop subtleties that won applause and money from the weak-minded, and to manufacture the most pretentious theories of the universe. He was a pettifogging philosopher, who availed himself of the inadequacy of finite words to express infinite meanings; and so gained praise and a fair living from the impressionable students who listened to his bewildering dialectics.

Just as the Christian Scientist blandly

says, "All is mind," and then proceeds to deduce a denial of disease, so the Sophist said, "All is mind," and then proceeded to deduce denials of the phenomena of nature. Both agree in the proposition,—trust your mind and doubt your senses.

One of these Sophists maintained that there could be no such thing as motion, because no object could move where it was, nor where it was not; therefore it could not move at all. The Eleatics denied being to the phases of change and finitude that appear in the world. Pure being, they said, was changeless and infinite.

Gorgias the Nihilist, (427 B. C.) expressed his philosophy in three propositions: (1) Nothing exists; (2) if anything existed, it would be unknowable; and (3) if anything existed and were knowable, the knowledge of it could not be communicated to others.

To the Sophist, all truth was an arbitrary affair, depending not upon investigation and experiment, but upon one's choice of arguments and phrases. Like the demented miller who kept his flour-mill running night and day, yet never poured any wheat in the hopper, the Sophist was the first to introduce the fashion, which has been so prevalent ever since, of setting the mind to work without giving it any raw material to work upon.

The natural result of such logic-chopping in Greece was the strangling of science by metaphysics. When the testimony of the senses is discredited, science becomes impossible. A fantastical and impractical tendency was given to Greek thought which seriously affected the mind of Plato, and to a less extent that of Aristotle. These two, together with Philo of Alexandria, exerted a most potent influence upon Christian theology,

and are chiefly responsible for the barren scholasticism of the Middle Ages, as well as for the mystical tendencies of to-day. The "Apostolical Succession" runs without a break from the Sophists of Athens to the Transcendentalists of Boston,—from Protagoras to Emerson.

The next collection of pseudo philosophers after the Sophists, was the sect known as *Gnostics* or *Manicheans*, (150 to 250 A.D.) They constructed a patchwork of Greek idealism, Oriental pantheism and orthodox Christianity. Like the modern mystic, they held that the "spiritual" part of man is the only fraction of him worth developing. They even went so far as to believe that nature was essentially evil ; and mutilated their own bodies to subdue them and give supremacy to the "soul." Christ, being perfectly pure, they said, did not have a real physical body, but only an appearance of one.

The idea of the "wickedness of the flesh" is an invariable product of mysticism, leading in the eleventh century to the self-torturing lunacy of the Flagellant monks ; and in later times to the austerities of Puritanism. Paul gave ground for this doctrine of the "sinful flesh" by saying, "I keep my body under ;" and throughout the Middle Ages thousands of monks and nuns deliberately ruined their health as a "means of grace."

Inconsistently enough, there was also a prevalent belief that the church could heal the sick, through the miraculous powers of its innumerable shrines. Every "Holy Coat," splinter of the Cross and box of the Apostles' bones had thousands of cures to its credit. All sensible people who used sanitary measures and decoctions of herbs were denounced as atheists and savagely persecuted.

In modern times, as asceticism and faith in relics declined, there has come a strange combination of the two, eliminating the most offensive features of both, and bringing them up to date as twentieth century products. This has been done by combining the soul-development idea of the monks with the faith-cure doctrine of Lourdes, throwing in a few modern phrases, and labeling the compound,—“Christian Science” and “Mental Science.”

But to return to these medieval sects, the one which most closely resembles modern Theosophy was that of the *Cabalists*. They survived as late as the seventeenth century, and numbered men of powerful and ingenious intellect among their adherents. Paracelsus, Cardan and Agrippa were their best known writers.

These Cabalists were men whose minds were too active to think solely along scholastic ruts, yet not strong enough to

throw off some of the most irrational traditions. They believed in the existence of spirits of nature,—sylphs who dwelt in the air, salamanders who dwelt in fire, ondines who dwelt in the water, and gnomes who dwelt in the earth.

The aim of the Cabalist philosopher was to so purify himself by fasting, celibacy and the study of nature, that he might rise to communion with these spirits. He believed that it was possible to obtain a sylph in literal marriage, and that to do so increased the prospects of heavenly bliss both for himself and his sylph-bride. A number of Cabalists actually claimed to have consummated such marriages, and held daily communication with their aerial wives.

No one in the Middle Ages seems to have doubted the existence of these spirits; but the orthodox regarded them as evil demons, and diligently burnt every Cabalist they could find. The

Cabalists, on the other hand, regarded orthodoxy with lofty contempt, and considered themselves the exponents of the "new thought." They mistook the faint twinkling of a morning star for the sunrise, as enthusiasts are always apt to do.

In a certain sense, they were the unscientific fore-runners of science. Their vague, romantic and superstitious love for nature was the first sign of an approaching Bacon, Copernicus and Newton. As Lecky has said, "the history of the Cabalists finishes, I think, a striking instance of the aberrations of a spirit of free-thinking in an age which was not ripe for its reception."

Had their love for nature and truth not been misguided by the rhapsodies of mysticism and the Platonic doctrine of spirits, the foundations of modern science might have been begun several centuries earlier. As it was, the Cabalists simply added a new and grotesque element to

the supernaturalism of their times, and contributed nothing to science or progress, except perhaps, by emphasizing that warning which is still most timely, "Beware of mysticism and metaphysics!"

Some diseases may be both caused and cured by religious emotion and morbid imagination. The most remarkable evidence of this is seen in the prevalence of "the dancing mania" of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It began in 1374, in Germany, and was caused by the religious terrorism that followed the "Black Death." We know it to-day in a mild form under the name of "St. Vitus' dance."

This "dancing mania" generally commenced with epileptic convulsions. Its victims fell to the ground, foaming at the mouth and senseless. Then they sprang to their feet, formed circles hand in hand, and danced and leaped for hours in the wildest delirium

During this paroxysm, they had visions of angels and demons, and shrieked out messages from these spirits to the terrified bystanders. One vision, which was very common, was the heavens opened, and a great white throne upon which sat Christ and the Virgin Mary. Many of the unfortunate victims of this weird malady became so frenzied that they dashed out their brains against stone walls, rushed over steep cliffs, or sprang headlong into rivers.

The sound of music and the sight of any red object was noticed to always aggravate the disorder. Sometimes several hundred people would be leaping and dancing at the same time ; and in one case a hundred children were seized with the strange madness.

It is supposed that this "dancing mania" was caused by the extreme religious melancholia that followed the Black Death, as this fearful plague had

swept away 25,000,000 of the people of Europe. It was the custom of the German peasants to celebrate the festival of St. John's day with wild dances and revels, and in the general terror and despair which followed the Black Death, these dances were transformed into the terrible epileptic convulsions that I have been describing. This is one of the clearest evidences of the propositions that this book seeks to establish, namely, that a harmless superstition will, under certain conditions of despondency and fear, at once become a malevolent and anti-social force.

Not only had the "dancing mania" an origin in religious superstition, but its victims were also cured by the same means. The afflicted peasants made pilgrimages to the shrines of St. Vitus, near Zabern and Rotestein, and large numbers were undoubtedly cured. It was by such miracles as these that the

faith-healing shrines became famous. One saint made the people crazy and another saint restored them to sanity. St. John caused the "dancing mania," and St. Vitus cured it. When the books are balanced it will be seen that faith has nothing to its credit, and that suffering, insanity and death were caused in thousands of instances by a superstition which had been regarded as harmless.

These epileptic disorders did not cease with the Dark Ages. As Professor J. K. F. Hecker has said: "Every species of enthusiasm, every violent passion, may lead to convulsions—to mental disorders—to a concussion of the nerves, from the sensorium to the very finest extremities of the spinal cord. The whole world is full of examples of this afflicting state of turmoil, which, when the mind is carried away by the force of a sensual impression that destroys its freedom, is irresistibly propagated by imitation. Those

who are thus infected do not spare even their lives, but as a hunted flock of sheep will follow their leader and rush over a precipice, so will whole hosts of enthusiasts, deluded by their infatuation, hurry on to a self-inflicted death. Of all enthusiastic infatuations, that of religion is the most fertile in disorders of the mind as well as of the body, and both spread with the greatest facility by sympathy."

A disorder very similar to the "dancing mania" was prevalent among the Methodists of the south of England. Terrified by the lurid word-painting of their fanatical preachers, the worshippers fell into convulsions, groaned, shrieked, leaped over the seats and had visions of hell opened to receive them. They showed every symptom of suffering extreme mental and physical anguish. They clasped their hands in frantic prayers and beat upon their breasts. The victim invariably cried out "What shall I do to be saved?"

and immediately was seized by the malady, which continued for several days.

In a number of cases, the preachers found that they had power to check the anguish of the afflicted people by describing the mercy of God, the provisions of the "atonement," and the joys of heaven. Those who were in convulsions felt themselves exalted from the depths of agony to the heights of bliss. They cried out joyfully that their sins were forgiven and their souls were saved. Girls and young women were most affected; and all the victims belonged to the most ignorant class.

It is estimated that at least four thousand people were "saved" and gathered into the fold of the Methodist church by this epileptic process.

The same phenomena appeared in the founding of the Methodist church in this country. The writer has seen the same convulsive malady attack the new con-

verts at the Indian camp-meetings, and thus add greatly to the "harvest of souls." The noted evangelist Finney had the power of thoroughly magnetizing his credulous hearers, and all manner of "signs and wonders" were caused by his frenzied exhortations. At the revivals held during the earlier part of the nineteenth century epileptic attacks were of general occurrence. Women swooned away by hundreds, weakened by convulsions. Others stripped off their clothing and plunged into rivers.

In Kentucky, one of these "means of grace" was the "devil-chase." Congregations of ignorant "crackers" would become so infuriated at the wiles of the "devil" that they would rush into the woods to "tree the devil." Sometimes men and women would run on all fours, barking and yelping like dogs. At last they would surround a tree, and with howls, prayers, and execrations terrify

the "devil" until he fled into the next county.

The same species of mystical insanity occurred in France in 1731 among the "Convulsionnaires." Several pilgrims who visited the tomb of a certain Deacon Paris, in the cemetery of St. Medard, Paris, were seized with convulsions and tetantic spasms, rolling on the ground and jerking their arms and legs in violent contortions. Others who were near by were similarly afflicted, and the news of the "miracle" spread like wildfire among the ignorant. Hundreds and sometimes thousands, visited the tomb every day, and there were always a dozen or so of "Convulsionnaires."

Some of the victims became clairvoyants, and read writing blindfolded, or described people who were not present. Clairvoyance had never been known in France before this time, and these feats created much excitement. The earth

from the grave of the Deacon was sent to sick people in distant parts of France, and was said to have cured them, though it is known that in some instances those who received it fell into convulsions.

Louis XV ordered the cemetery to be closed, and the local phenomena was thus checked. A Parisian wit wrote a line on the gate which did much to ridicule the superstition out of existence. It ran to this effect: "By order of the King, the Lord is forbidden to work any more of his miracles here."

This senseless and harmful sect of "Convulsionnaires" continued, however for sixty years; and a few were known to exist as late as 1828. It was defended by learned men of the upper classes,—as Montgeron the deputy. It would probably have continued until this day, adapting itself to modern times by the use of philosophical and scientific phrases, if it had not been broken up by the French Revolution.

It is difficult for us to notice at first that the grotesque epileptic mysticism such as we have been reviewing bears any close resemblance to the idealistic mysticism of to-day. But such is undeniably the fact. Both spring from the spirit of devoutness and the contemplation of a metaphysical doctrine. The trance of the Spiritualist is just as irrational as the convulsions of the fourteenth century peasants.

All quietism, from the highest to the lowest, is the product of faith as against reason. All its conclusions are reached by deduction from unproved premises. It is all based upon mental derangement, arising from melancholia and intense self-consciousness. Its origin is the almost ineradicable fallacy, so dear to undeveloped minds, that the infinite is the slave of the finite,—that the universe exists for the atom.

Strange as it may seem to those who

have not studied the vagaries and countless disguises of mysticism, the belief in *witchcraft* was one of its phases. It is, as can be easily shown, but the obverse side of Christian Science and Mental Science. It is what these modern faith and mind curists would at once degenerate into, given the medieval atmosphere of credulity and superstitious terrorism.

These two cults profess to bring health and help to people by the same mystical means as witches were supposed to bring disease, accident and death. The Mental Healer professes to give "absent treatment" of disease,—to send "vibrations" of power and vitality hundreds and even thousands of miles, so that they will reach the designed individual with more than the certainty of a telegram.

Mrs. Helen Wilmans says: "The will is a forceful and highly vitalized current of substantial life essence which flows from me to you to convey health and to

eradicate your disease." "I often treat persons most effectively without their knowledge." "My strong, purposeful, vital will-force will enter and flow through you, as the breezes sweep through the trees, carrying away all diseased conditions." "My thought will enter and reconstruct you. It will literally rebuild you." (From "Instructions to Patients.")

If these amazing propositions were generally believed, and the powers that these "Scientists" claim were conceded to them, is it not evident that an epidemic of typhoid, diptheria or malaria among persons who were being "treated" would originate a suspicion that the Healers were projecting "vibrations" of disease?

If the will may be a "substantial life essence" flowing from the Healer to the patient, why not also a death essence, sapping the vitality of those against whom the Healer has ill-will? If people

may be "reconstructed" and "rebuilt," "without their knowledge" of the cause, why may they not be shattered and depleted in the same mysterious way?

During a recent trial in which the Christian Scientists of New York were interested to the extent of \$50,000, they claimed to have 50,000 "Scientists" who were concentrating their "thought" and "will-force" upon the unfortunate judge, to influence his decision in their favor. If a similar consensus of thought were to be devised to bring harm or punishment to some enemy of Christian Science, then the phenomena of witchcraft would be revived, with all its hideous terrorism.

This is not as improbable as it may seem to those who underestimate the amount of latent superstition that has been carried into the twentieth century. The writer has met a number of people, well-read and apparently rational in every

other respect, who believed that evil thoughts brought direct harm to those against whom they were directed.

One of the commonest causes for which "witches" were put to death was the bewitching of cows, horses and farmers' crops. Not long since, at a Committee hearing of the N. Y. Legislature, George H. Kinter, of Buffalo, swore that he had cured all kinds of diseases by postal, telephone and telegraph ; and Carrol F. Norton, of New York, testified that he had cured cows, horses, dogs and plants by Christian Science, and treated them just as he would human beings. Does this not indicate a recrudescence of belief in witchcraft? In all matters of faith, it is but a step from promises to threats ; and the Healer who can cure one horse of the heaves by "will-force" will very probably be able to give another horse the glanders by the same method.

"Your poverty is the protracted echo

of your own belief," says Helen Wilmans. "Poverty is a belief as much as small-pox or cholera," says Lida Hood Talbot. If, then, poverty is in the same category with disease, and may be cured by postal, or "without the knowledge of the patient," the door is open to the same explanations of business failure that were given in the Middle Ages. The doctrine of the "evil eye" may be revived, and friendless old women accused of sending their "will-force" out against their neighbors' cattle, or crops, or health, or business enterprises.

It must be remembered that while the belief in witchcraft has apparently disappeared, and is not to-day considered worthy of serious attention, it was very prevalent within the memory of many who are still living. Parke Godwin informed the writer that when a boy he had frequently seen old women pointed out as "witches" in the streets of New

York. Superstition, like fire, is often only smouldering when it is thought to be extinguished.

For 1500 years witchcraft was universally believed in Europe. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and the Puritan divines of New England believed in it. Blackstone thought it undeniable. It was held to be proved by the Bible, which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." It was attested by any number of confessions, and the most varied and ample evidence. Nothing, in fact, tends to show more clearly the unreliability of direct evidence than the unanimity with which hundreds of thousands of witnesses swore away the lives of innocent old women during the Middle Ages.

The legislators of almost every land enacted laws against witchcraft. It was regarded as a possible crime by the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Hebrews, Germans, French, Italians, Spanish,

English and Americans. It was never denied by any of the colleges, and the learned philosophers shared the belief equally with the most illiterate peasants.

Strangest of all, many of the accused old women confessed to the most impossible feats of magic. So intense was the popular belief that they no doubt believed themselves to be guilty of the charges for which they were burnt.

Again and again this maddest of all madnesses swept over Europe like a prairie fire, always worse after a plague, famine, or national calamity. The number of victims will never be accurately known. At the one city of Treves 7000 were burnt. The Bishop of Bamberg boasted of having put 600 to death, while a judge of Nancy claimed to have sentenced 800 to the stake. The Spanish Inquisition executed 400 at one time. In Como, Italy, 1,000 perished in one year. Even in Salem, Mass., 27 people were judicially

murdered by the Puritans on the charge of witchcraft.

So overwhelming was the mass of sworn evidence accumulated by the church, Protestant and Catholic, that no one dared to question it until the year 1588, when Montaigne, the first sensible man Europe had produced since Marcus Aurelius, published his book,—the first sceptical work in the French language. He did not attempt to answer arguments, or pick flaws in the evidence. He said: "I do not pretend to unravel these proofs. I often cut them, as Alexander did the knot. After all, it is setting a high value upon our opinions, to roast men and women alive on account of them." As Lecky has said, "Montaigne was the first great representative of the modern secular and rationalistic spirit."

To sum up, the study of the witchcraft mania, and its relation to modern mystical and faith-healing cults, suggests sev-

eral interesting resemblances between the two.

(1.) Both produced phenomena that mystified scientists and thinkers.

(2.) Both accumulated a vast mass of direct evidence to substantiate their claims.

(3.) Both are based upon a mystical power which some are said to possess, for good or evil, over the persons and destinies of others.

(4.) Both numbered among their members men and women of undoubted intelligence in other directions.

(5.) Both professedly antagonize the conclusions of secular common sense and medical science.

(6.) Both appeal to that superstitious sense of wonder and credulity which is strongest in the most undeveloped minds.

(7.) Both can be traced back to the monasticism which sprang from Plato's idealism and doctrine of demons.

(8.) The form in which the superstition

appears fluctuates from witch-burning to Mental Science, in accordance with the intellectual development of the nation.

(9.) A spasm of religious terrorism at the present day would revive among Christian Science societies the phenomena of witchcraft.

(10.) Witchcraft having now been universally acknowledged to be religious mania, and "the blackest of superstitions," it is probable that a more enlightened age than ours will classify all modern similar beliefs as religious manias in a milder form.

(11.) Any belief, however absurd and pernicious, may obtain large numbers of adherents providing it appeals to the religious emotions.

(12.) The best preventives of all such superstitions are the increase of the sceptical and scientific spirit, and the promotion of every form of secular and practical education.

CHAPTER II.

SUPERSTITIONS VENEERED WITH SCIENCE.

DURING the last two or three years scores of papers and magazines have been started by the metaphysical and faith-healing people. In a chance copy of one of these papers I find the following mystical publications mentioned: "Spirit," "Realization," "The Circle of Light," "The Logos Magazine," "The Independent Thinker," "The Interpreter," "Mind," "Adiramled," "Fred Burry's Journal," "The Christian," "The Elevator," "The Physical Digest and Occult Review of Reviews," "The Metaphysical Magazine," "The Nautilus," "Unity," "Spirit of Truth," "Life Holiday," "Physical Immortality,"

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“Freedom,” “Suggestion,” “Occult Truths,” “Higher Law,” “Life,” “Radiant Centre,” “Revolution,” “Eleanor Kirk’s Idea.”

In addition to this flood of weekly and monthly rubbish, tens of thousands of mystical books are being published every year. This is the most serious symptom and makes these delusions worthy of the attention of rationalists. These books and magazines must have buyers and readers. Some of them are so incoherent and extravagant that they are plainly not edited by any sane person, nor taken seriously by any sane reader.

As the *N. Y. Post* remarks, “Mysticism is a constant joy to the sceptic.” The extraordinary uses to which words are subjected and the amazing claims made by rival sects, all clamoring for dupes, furnish a continuous performance for those who care for metaphysical vaudeville. Here, for example, is the first

page of a leaflet which has been circulated widely in New York.

"The Science and Philosophy of Human Activity Harmoniously develops the Physical, Mental and Psychic Beauty of Man, Through *Practical Altruism* by Means of an Original and Rapid Method of *Natural Song*, Upon a Purely Scientific Basis, Independent of Sex, Age or Creed.

"We guarantee maximum vocal quality, power, compass, flexibility, execution, colorature (especially the trill); also, emotional and dramatic expression, without vocal practise or drudgery, absolutely eliminating fear, making amateurs appear like professionals.

"We guarantee a beautiful face, bust, abdomen, and an elastic, graceful carriage, through blood circulation, assisted by the correct corset, with ease and courage in manner and conversation.

"Furthermore, by elevating the individual to his maximum excellence, we

guarantee to improve his business capacity, or, if he be misplaced, to lead him to the avocation which will ensure his fullest success. In fact, we claim to have discovered the secret of "Genius," and to teach it scientifically."

At the end of this modest leaflet are the names of graduates who have reached "Genius" by means of "Natural Song" and "The correct corset."

Another New York apostle of the "New Thought," who runs a church, school and magazine, claims to have discovered the "Therapeutic Practise of Mentology." He teaches "how to build and reconstruct character; strengthen the will; purify thoughts; supplant vice with virtue; fortify the memory; revitalize exhausted nerves and the depleted system; and utilize the laws of health by the application of Mental Forces."

In a single number of his magazine this Therapeutic Mentologist uses the fol-

lowing adjectives to describe his own achievements : Independent, Characteristic, Thoroughgoing, Scientific, Unparalleled, Scholarly, Edifying, Breezy, Brilliant, Convincing, Great, Eloquent, New, Learned, Unique, Exhaustive, Erudite, Remarkable, Interesting, Captivating, Ideal, Logical, Original, Startling, Truthful. He also publishes in the same number six letters from readers, praising him inordinately, showing that not even the "Scientific" use of "Mental Forces" can eradicate mendacity and conceit.

An erratic reporter named Prentice Mulford is responsible for a great deal of sentimental mysticism in the New England States. His central dogma was,—
Yearn for a thing hard enough and you're sure to get it. Some of his disciples in New York have organized the "Church of the Silent Desire." One of the authors of this sect says, "There is no persistent

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longing that can enter the mind of man, but that it will be fulfilled."

Of all forms of quietism, this seems to be the most acquisitive and the least rational.

From whom are all the longed-for articles to come? If we all sat down and yearned, what would happen? If persistent longing brings its reward, why don't more shop-girls marry Dukes? And why don't we get cats that won't howl on the back fence?

This Mulfordism is, of course, only a slight exaggeration of the orthodox doctrine of prayer, doctored up for the benefit of those who are out of touch with the churches, but not intellectually above them. For the personal service of a deity it substitutes the laws of nature, and teaches the insanely egotistical dogma that the will of a tiny human being will compel obedience from the cosmos. It is a typical product of present-day mysti-

cism, and has recently been merged into Mental Science.

One of the most ambitious attempts to give a philosophical explanation of "ghosts" is a doctrine called "Substantialism," originated by a Dr. Hall. According to it, the spiritual and physical co-exist in every atom of matter, like a hand in a glove. The body of a psychically developed man is but the outer casement of his inner self or body, and when he desires he may walk about unhampered by the physical body, and invisible if he pleases to the eyes of ordinary mortals.

Thus the way is clear for all manner of "appearances" and visions. The unfortunate physical body, as usual, is treated like an old shoe; and all ordinary means of knowledge, progress and locomotion are considered outgrown expedients. The interests with which the practical citizen is concerned are regarded

as beneath the notice of people who have demonstrated the theory of immortality.

As yet, this "substantialist" theory, which is a sort of grotesque development of the Leibnitzian doctrine of monads, has found few believers, as no masterful magnetic leader has arisen to present its claims. Given a Blavatsky or an Annie Besant, and it would number its recruits by the thousand, as it is so constructed as to be an admirable booby-trap for those who crave "signs and wonders."

There is a certain sort of hopelessly incurable sentimentalists, who are ready to believe anything that has a romantic or mystical flavor. Their minds have been stored with nothing more substantial than historical fiction; and a lack of contact with the world has prevented them from having any knowledge of every-day facts. They have no more power of reflection than a child, and have an abnormally developed imagination.

Shortly before the return of Dewey from Manila, I met a perfect specimen of this sort at the Twentieth Century Club in Boston. At the close of my remarks a lady in strange Oriental attire rushed up and said in gushing tones : " Oh, tell me, don't you think Admiral Dewey may be the Herald of the Morning ? "

There is no doubt that if a Dewey religion had been started, and he had been proclaimed as the Heaven-sent Messiah of Humanity, hundreds of these sentimentalists would have thrown themselves at his feet. Hero-worshippers must have heroes, whether Admirals, or pianists, or actors, or prophets. As long as we have a large class of idle women in doll's houses, we shall have such foolish crazes as these.

Invariably these occult sects and " divine philosophies " wind up in a miserable fiasco. Almost every co-operative colony that has set out to be the guide

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to a world-wide Co-operative Commonwealth, has terminated in a lawsuit and a struggle for bread. The "esthetic" cult in London ended in bestiality, with its founder in jail, and in a number of towns, Spiritualism has died out in a carnival of uncleanness.

It may be laid down as an axiom that whenever any body of people profess to be governed by a creed of absolute purity, justice, truth, love, &c., they will in a few years fall short of common, everyday decency and square-dealing. They attempt what is impossible, and the reaction brings them behind what is ordinary. Every sect that starts with extravagant sentiments of love to all men, will wind up with some small, definite, thoroughly selfish and commercial enterprise.

There is no better example of this than in the short career of Theosophy. It was founded by Helena P. Blavatsky, "a messenger of the adepts," in 1875. It

quickly attracted a number of clever people,—Olcott, Judge, and Annie Besant. Its principles were, “(1) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without any distinctions whatever. (2) To promote the study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences. (3) To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers of man.”

Blavatsky, who had the appearance of an enormously fat gypsy fortune-teller, with magnetic hands and eyes like an owl, held her disciples together until her death. W. Q. Judge then became the “leader” for a few years, and at his death the power became divided between two women,—Annie Besant and Katherine A. Tingley.

The two opposing bodies anathematized one another with Himalayan objurgations. Each claimed to be the “only and original” Theosophists. Instead of

being a "Universal Brotherhood of Humanity," the Theosophists began to squabble more bitterly than the Booth family, in spite of the efforts of several billion Mahatmas.

The Tingley branch determined to do something spectacular and impressive, to outrival the Besant branch. So they arranged for a "Crusade around the World." Six or seven of the wealthiest members, with Mrs. Tingley, went on a pleasure trip through Europe, Asia, Africa and America, holding parlor seances in several cities in every continent. In this brilliant way, they preached the gospel of Theosophy to "all the peoples of the earth." The fact that only about fifty people in each country heard the "gospel" seems to have been overlooked. If the rest of the world's population did not attend, it was of course their own fault.

After this glorious Mission Tour, Mrs. Tingley bought a tract of land at Point

Loma, Cal. She had received orders from her invisible bosses to establish a "School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity." The corner-stone was laid in 1897, in the presence of about four hundred humans, and about forty million spirits. This stone consisted of four pyramidal pieces which fitted together and formed a perfect cube. Each piece, to serve some mystic purpose, came from a different land,—from Ireland, Scotland, Egypt and America.

The curriculum of the school was thus outlined: "Here the existence of the soul is to be proved and its nature and attributes revealed. The students will be taught the science of man's place in nature, and his relation to his fellow-men and the universe. This will involve a knowledge of nature's mysterious laws and the solution of the mysteries of man's own being: 'Who am I? Whence came I? Whither do I go?'"

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But alas for human hopes ! While all the world's thinkers waited breathlessly for the answer to these riddles of the universe, no reply came from Point Loma. At last, after a three years' silence, the news comes that Mrs. Tingley has formed a syndicate composed of three Eastern capitalists and herself, to plant mulberry trees and start a silk farm. The trees have now been planted, and we may now expect at any time to hear that a number of Chinese coolies have been hired at less than the prevailing rate of wages. Such is Theosophy, reduced to its last analysis.

It is quite certain that in a few years Christian Science and Mental Science will also die out in an atmosphere of scandal and commercialism. The leaders of such sects invariably proceed from one absurd claim to another, until their followers begin to suspect them ; then they at once abandon all pretense of disinter-

estedness, and scramble for money by methods which professional gamblers would scorn to use.

The mystic is always absolutely self-centred. His own welfare, "spiritual" or otherwise, is his only concern. And whenever his integrity is tested in ordinary matters, it is generally found to be of the poorest quality. His virtue is as spurious as his "revelations." He is not an advanced thinker or doer, but far below the average of ordinary men.

Mysticism flourishes only among uncritical and credulous people. It does not invite criticism. Its prophets avoid discussions, and appear only before audiences that are as passive and receptive as a row of rain-barrels. If they are stopped in the midst of their phrase-spinning and asked for exact definitions, they declare in the most approved ecclesiastical fashion that the high truths they are proclaiming cannot be explained to a

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questioner who lacks "spiritual comprehension."

As Dresser naively says,—“We know what we mean until we are asked to define it.” This answer should be memorized by all religionists. It is the only reply that the muddle-headed can make to the clear-headed. It is the stammering excuse of the theologian, caught in the act of manufacturing new gods and new plans of salvation.

If what a man calls his thought is not clear to himself, how can he make it clear to others? What right has he to pose as a professional expounder and definer? What right has he to issue books and publish magazines and form classes of disciples, when his own theories are too nebulous to be defined?

Clear exact definitions are the first requisites of instruction, in all branches of knowledge,—in metaphysics and theology as much as in mathematics. I

sincerely hope that before the twentieth century terminates, every religious, metaphysical and poetical writer will be compelled by public opinion to add a glossary to the preface of his books, concisely defining every important word that he uses. If this requirement had been insisted upon during the last twenty centuries, many a creed and philosophy would have been still-born.

If two meant sometimes 2+3, and sometimes 2—3, there could be no laws of arithmetic. If water were at one time H_2O , and at another time H_3O , there could be no science of chemistry. If iron were as variable as the weather,—to-day tough and durable and to-morrow as soft as dough, it would lose all its distinctive value in the estimate of engineers and builders. And for similar reasons metaphysics and theology are justly ignored by scientific men. On these two themes the writers continually use words that have a great many different meanings, and often words that have

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no reality in fact,—originating in dreams, in fits of terror, or in the myths of pre-historic times.

Before Mental Science, for instance, can be accredited as a science or an intellectual pursuit, it must define such words as God, soul, substance, spirit, disease, thought, infinite, evil, personality, vibration. The whole structure of Mental and Christian Science depends upon the meaning of these words, and no definitions are given.

Think of the countless grades of meaning of the word "God," for example, from the whiskered Hebrew who sits on a cloud and sends a pigeon down to alight on his son's head, as pictured in the Bibles of the Middle Ages, up to what Herbert Spencer has reverently termed the "Unknowable." Carlyle and Cotton Mather both frequently used the word "God,"—the first with a lofty and permissible meaning, but the second with a meaning of fanatical savagery that would in a civilized and humane age

have caused his confinement in a sanitarium, if not in a padded cell. "God's in his Heaven," sings Browning; "God is the great All" says the Mental Scientist; "God will save you," shrieks the Salvation Army captain; "God loves you," drones the hireling priest to the convicted murderer; "God is angry," yells the Indian medicine-man.

And so, with countless meanings, the word "God" has been spoken in blessing and cursing, in pleading and denunciation, in aiding and torturing,—to inspire and comfort, or to persecute and damn. Men have ascribed to "God" their meanest, cruelest vices, and their noblest, tenderest virtues. He has been the architect of Heaven and of Hell. He has been portrayed as an Arab sheikh, with a fierce preference for his own chosen tribe; and as a sort of conscious electricity, pervading all space and all matter.

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To the theist "God" has been the grandest word in the language; to the atheist it has been a generic term to express all human ignorance. There are twenty thousand or more voters in America who refuse to go to the polls because the word "God" is not in the Constitution; and there are thousands who refuse strenuously even to utter it when giving legal evidence.

When, therefore, a new philosophy or creed appears, and persistently uses a word which has had such a checkered career as this, we have a right to insist upon its definition, or to protest against the use of a word which has no par value.

The same objection may be raised with regard to the word "soul." In the pictures drawn by medieval artists the "soul" is represented as a bladder or a sexless child, issuing from the mouth of the dying person and rising into the grasp of angel or demon. All the Chris-

tian "Fathers" believed that the "soul" was visible and corporeal. This belief was unquestioned until Descartes declared that thought was the essence of the "soul," and that it could not properly be defined in terms of matter.

To-day the corporeity of the soul is believed only by the most illiterate religionists, and by a small group of pseudo-philosophers called "Substantialists," whose creed we have noticed. The general orthodox view is that the "soul" is the moral self, divested of all practical and intellectual attributes. It is the thing that they pray and worship with. Going to church helps it, and going to a free-thought meeting hurts it. It is quite different and separate from the everyday brain, and development of brain is thought to be a serious menace to development of "soul."

To the more liberal religionists, the "soul" is personality, persisting in some

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mysterious way after the dissolution of the body. It is defined as the essence of character, and is supposed to be the one thing in the world which time cannot disintegrate. There is also a poetic meaning of the word "soul," by which is meant the noble and heroic side of human nature.

Of all these definitions, which does the Mental Scientist endorse? Does he believe that dead men are dead, or that they are not dead? Is the "soul" the reason, or is it some subtle gas of personality which is superior to logic and common sense and terrestrial experience? Does he agree with the priest or the Unitarian or the poet? Or has he a newly invented meaning of his own? And how can we know what he is writing about until he explains such idealess words as these?

The same mystification prevails with regard to most of the doctrines of all ancient and modern occult and pantheis-

tic sects. They mistake every muddy pool for the ocean, and fancy it is infinitely deep because they cannot see the bottom. As soon as a level-headed man happens along with a yard stick, their ocean is shown to be a mud-puddle and no more.

Not only do mystics lack clearness of thought, but they regard it as an obstacle in the way of spiritual development. They invent preposterous exercises by which the mind may be benumbed and intoxicated.

These exercises are supposed to enable the believer to rise to the "subliminal self," which is, in the opaque language of inspiration, "the individual's destiny, his divinity, his immortality." A magazine called "Realization" gives specific directions for peeling off the outside layers of personality and reaching the subliminal inside of ourselves. It says: "The Oriental practice of sitting upon

the floor or cushion, with limbs folded inward, the body erect, and fingers extended, is the best posture. The position of the extremities aids in conserving the auric radiations. Breathe slowly and deeply, and think of nothing; then concentrate your attention upon yourself. You have thus released the consciousness from the hypnotic control of environmental suggestion."

If this novel catalepsy (patent applied for) does not bring the "subliminal self" from his lair, then it might be well, no doubt, to eat two lobster salads and a whole mince pie and retire for the night. There are always "angels hovering around" when devout people go to sleep with indigestion.

Thus it is plain that mysticism is a mixture of emotionalism and muddle-headedness. It may spring from fear, or rapture, or dreams, or melancholia, or any strong passion. In no case does it

ever have an intellectual origin. It bears the same relation to science and good citizenship that an opium-joint does to a college class-room. Mystics are mental inebriates. Just as the worry and strain of business drives men to drink or morphine or sensuality, so the mystery of the universe drives others to seek relief in brain-benumbing fallacies.

Instead of mysticism being a preventive of disease, it is rather a product of an abnormal and unhealthy condition of body and mind, especially the latter. To be wide-awake, clear-headed, and "on the spot," is to be unfit for mystical influences. A hazy, muzzy, expectant frame of mind is required to obtain results.

This has been so in all ages and countries. In Klunzinger's "Upper Egypt" the following Mahometan receipt is given for summoning spirits: "Fast seven days in a lonely place, and take incense with

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you. Read a chapter 1,001 times from the Koran, and you will see indescribable wonders. Drums will be beaten beside you. Flags will be hoisted over your head, and you will see spirits."

This "spiritual" exercise, with modern variations, is still followed by all mystics. Ill-treat your body and benumb your brain! Insult your judgment and outrage your commonsense! Think only of "Me and God!" In this way you may become a genuine Hindoo adept, qualified to teach the poor ignorant multitude at the rate of five dollars per lesson, payable in advance.

"If you will visit asylums for the insane," says Professor Frederick R. Marvin, M. D., "you will find men and women who believe themselves to be media for interplanetary communication, bubbling over with stanzas of ineffable vapidity, and building rhetorical air-castles on the ever-shifting clouds of their

own fancy. The insane are proverbially sophists. Their logic is always tainted with an overweening self-consciousness. Were Mahomet now living, he would be confined in an asylum, and the Koran would not be revealed. We shall never know how many revelations as wonderful as any which dawned on the astonished vision of Mahomet and Swedenborg are prevented, and how many incipient religions are nipped in the bud, by judicious doses of bromide of potassium, belladonna, zinc, confinement and other remedial agents. Certain it is that the wards of our asylums are thickly settled with prophets, saints, apostles and mediums, of whose visions the world is deprived."

The literature of epileptics is generally of a religious character. The delusions grow out of visions preceding or succeeding the epileptic trance. It is often the case that the patients are most refined and well-educated men and women. Ask

any alienist to explain to you the phenomena of psychical epilepsy. He will tell you that invariably the patient has hallucinations of a poetic or religious nature. The imagination is stimulated, and the mind is filled with rapid chains of fantastic ideas. The patient attributes to his environment impressions which originate in his imagination. He believes that these imaginative creations are realities, and fancies that other people can also see them.

Thus, when on three different occasions, after the delivery of a lecture, I have been solemnly informed by an occultist or clairvoyant that I was a medium, and that a spook of some kind had been standing on the platform beside me, I knew at once that my informant was afflicted with some form of psychical epilepsy.

Also, when a lady informed me that she had been Cleopatra, and that she

and her occult friends had seen the spirit of the Egyptian Queen passing in and out of her body; it was at once apparent that an alienist should be consulted. Psychical epilepsy is, I believe, not only the most accurate but also the most charitable explanation of the visions of mystics and saints.

An article recently appeared in the leading Mental Science monthly entitled "The Value of the Unbalanced Man." The tenor of the article is such as to give great comfort to all who have marked idiosyncracies; and it is thus eminently suited for the journal in which it appeared. The underlying fallacy of the argument is the failure to distinguish between the unbalanced *genius* and the unbalanced mediocrity.

Genius is so rare and priceless that we are ready to forgive any oddities that may accompany it. We do not mind getting the diamond in the rough, pro-

viding we are sure it is a diamond. But a common pebble in the rough is worthless. The only value it can acquire is that of being carved and polished. The oddities without the genius are merely clownish and grotesque. As soon as a man discovers that he is not a genius, the wisest course for him to pursue is to endeavor to become a well-balanced man. Genius may exist without common-sense, but mediocrity never should. If a man is neither clever nor sensible, he is an all-round misfit,—of no value either for use or for ornament.

The phenomena of faith-curism and mysticism properly belong to the specialists in brain diseases. Nothing has been demonstrated more clearly than that the testimony of consciousness is fallible and misleading, if the brain be in an unhealthy condition. Only give the students of psychical epilepsy, hysteria and hypnotism twenty or thirty

years longer, and I am certain that they will present a scientific explanation of these abnormal mental states that will remove occultism forever from the path of progress.

When the brain receives the same exhaustive study that surgeons have given to the body, mysticism in all its ramifications will pass from the realms of ethics and philosophy to that of disease. Dr. E. A. Spitzka, the noted alienist of New York, said recently, "Most of the study of the brain has been carried on with the use of the cerebra of criminals, lunatics and other defectives. The brains of public men of professional or scientific eminence are rarely obtainable. This is a reproach to the community and a loss to science which should be speedily remedied."

Just as we leave the geographical "unknowable" to explorers; and the mechanical "unknowable" to inventors;

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and the harmonic "unknowable" to musicians; so we may safely leave the psychical "unknowable" to impartial specialists, who investigate not to organize a cult, but to explain what is at present incomprehensible. Least of all should we accept any mysterious phenomena as proof of any theory. Nothing can be evidence except that which is known, as the Christian theologians discovered over a hundred years ago when Hume compelled them to drop miracles from their list of Christian evidences.

If a man tells you he has seen visions of the dead, or remembers meeting Ramesses Third, or has obtained a signed statement from a Mahatma, or has cured a rubber-plant by thought-influence, instead of regarding him as a spiritual genius, advise him gently to consult an alienist, and to join the most convenient gymnasium.

None of the modern mystical cults can

produce a tithe of the "proofs" that witchcraft could show in its favor. The forgotten absurdities of Cabalism were attested by the personal experiences of their believers. Yet no sensible man to-day would regard either of these beliefs as anything more than a delusion.

Until recently, adventurers like "Count" Cagliostro could by a little knowledge of hypnotism persuade thousands to reverence them as wonder-workers and prophets. Fifty years ago, when the uses of phosphorus were not popularly known, many chemical students were able to mystify and alarm their friends by painting faces of fire upon their walls at night, or by waving hands of fire in the air. When harmonicas were first invented, those who could play upon the tiny instruments were regarded with superstitious awe, as being able to produce "angel-music" by simply putting their hands to their mouths.

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Kennan, in his book on Siberia, tells of entering the hut of a Korak, and finding that the household god was a photo of Major-General Dix, cut out of a Harper's Magazine. It was the first photo the Korak had ever seen, and he therefore regarded it as possessing the powers of Deity. African explorers relate instances in which wax-dolls have been discovered in the rude god-huts of the savages. Thus we see that religions are always based upon the unknown,—upon the fear and ignorance of man.

But mystics and religion-builders have been driven back step by step by the advance of science. They can no longer "spit fire" to prove their claim to Messiahship, as did the ancient Asiatic prophets. They cannot attract worshippers to their temples by burning natural gas, as did the priests of Baku. Catalepsy as an evidence of prophetship is now outgrown, save at an occasional Methodist

revival down South. The ventriloquial powers which made the priests of Delhi famous and wealthy would bring no returns to-day, even on the vaudeville stage. Comets, eclipses, earthquakes, thunder and lightning have all lost their power to create the devout and credulous spirit which all mystical and superstitious cults require.

Keller, the magician, will perform more miraculous tricks in the course of an evening's entertainment than could all the prophets and wonder-workers of the Middle Ages. And Keller can carry on his deceptions undetected in front of an observant and sceptical audience, without the aid of Gounod's music or "dim religious light."

Consequently, the man or woman who wishes at the present day to appeal to faith and credulity is obliged to take refuge in psychical phenomena. We know far less about our minds than we



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do about our bodies. Even to the profoundest thinkers, thought is as yet a mystery. Psychologists have not gone much further than the classification of mental phenomena.

"Fools rush in," as usual, where wise men fear to tread. The Christian Scientist, who has never seen a human brain examined in his life, nor read even one book on psychology, proclaims that "Mind is substance ;" "Mind is force ;" "Nothing exists save ideas :;" "Thought is the creator of the physical." It is the same old exploitation of the unknown. The Christian Science "reader," apparently a lady of refinement and twentieth century culture, is in reality occupying the same relative place in modern society that the medicine-man did among the Choctaws and Comanches.

The plodding psychologists, examining brain after brain, testing, experimenting, analyzing, may not be able to formulate

a science of thought for a century or more. Therefore, until their work is finished, the mystic and the "Healer" may flourish, and their quackery be accepted as "Divine philosophy" by the least rational people in the world.

To-day all who have studied the history of human opinions have no faith in conclusions that are based upon intuitions. Consciousness is like the dictionary,—it gives you whatever you search for. Philosophies and religions based on intuitions have existed in the most barbarous times, without being felt as a progressive or a refining influence. As Frederic May Holland observes "Transcendentalism is a swivel-gun which may be fired in any direction."

There is now little or no doubt that intuitions are simply inherited or acquired mental tendencies. A man may have an intuition that makes him murder or steal. Jesse Pomeroy, the boy fiend,

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had intuitions that prompted him to torture and kill small boys. The intuitions of Emerson and Pomeroy alike sprang from the nature of their own minds, and not from any external source, divine or infernal.

Every "intuition" must be passed upon by the reason, before it is allowed to govern conduct or opinion. The Reason is the Supreme Court of the mind. Its decision should be final, and "conscience" and "intuition" should be entirely subject to its rulings. It is upon this condition only that sanity is maintained.

Many people read Emerson when they have only capacity enough for Fenimore Cooper. No law can prevent this, yet the result is often serious. It is like feeding a three-months-old baby on corned beef and cabbage. Emerson is not for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. He thought for thinkers only. His essays

are all esoteric. They are like the scriptures that "the ignorant wrest to their own destruction." Emerson was a great thinker in spite of his mysticism, not because of it.

Scores of verdant scribblers have imitated and betrayed the weaker and more obscure portions of his writings. They actually imagine that he meant such as they when he said, "Trust thyself." Undoubtedly Emerson's key-note was self-reliance, but he never for an instant advised that the unlearned and inexperienced should dignify their own speculative vapidities by the name of wisdom. Did he not reiterate,—“Life is not dialectics?” Did he not, in his essay on “Books,” reveal his own very great debt to the thoughts of others? He developed his doctrine to the utmost limit that common sense and sanity would allow, and the Mental Scientists who push it to an irrational extreme only prove that it is but a

step from the sublime to the ridiculous. For instance, Dresser, who is one of several who try to be philosophers without any intellectual equipment, imagines that his style is Emersonian when he says,—“To know that everything we need is within, here and now,—this is poise.” What a consolation to the student who is stupid and lazy! If this be true, what need of schools, libraries, laboratories, and universities? If this had been the motto of the human race, we would be to-day “poised” in the tree-tops with the rest of the simian tribes. No doubt the owl has “poise.” No new idea ever disturbs his placid and solemn self-satisfaction.

Such a precept might be appropriate at a “new thought” banquet, when “everything they need is within;” but when it is preached as an everyday creed it is a prolific cause of arrested development. What does it avail to look within

if the mind be empty? The mind is not filled during sleep from some celestial storehouse. We only know what we have learned; we only have what we have gathered. There is no royal road to self-sufficiency, — no twelve-lesson-course pathway to genius.

Mystical cults generally accompany some great scientific or intellectual movement. They follow after, like gulls in the wake of a steamer, picking up the crumbs that may be dropped. They seize the new principle that has just been discovered, and carry it to a preposterous extreme, betrashing the phrases of scientists and thinkers.

For instance, Ruskin proclaimed his doctrine of beauty to the nation that needed it most. He contrasted the matchless fields of England with her coal-cursed cities. He protested as strongly against commercialism from the standpoint of beauty as did Carlyle from the

standpoint of honesty. Following in the wake of Ruskin came that putrescent genius, Oscar Wilde, degrading love for beauty into the "esthetic craze." The healthy sentiment awakened by Ruskin was echoed among the shallow-brains of London in the most vapid gush and twaddle. The roses and lilies that have been planted by Ruskin were overgrown and choked by sunflowers. The final result was what often happens. The prophet of the esthetic cult, adored by his followers as the Christ of the new religion, proved in a very few years to be too vile a wretch to allow in a community of savages.

Following after Darwin and Wallace came Blavatsky, the magnetic woman from India. Her doctrine was nothing but the echo of the theory of evolution, as heard in the Himalayas. It was the blending, in a mystical mind, of the Vedas and "The Origin of Species."

Evolution was renamed "unfoldment." The craving of the mystic to give all universal principles a specific and personal application, led to the doctrines of "Karma" and "Reincarnation." The Socialist and humanitarian movements also stamped themselves upon the impressionable creed of Theosophy in its adoption of the phrase "universal brotherhood."

Following after Hobbs and Hume and their French co-workers, who unsettled the foundations of orthodoxy, came Swedenborg, and after him the Fox sisters and the whole tribe of mediums. The disbelief aroused in the Biblical miracles, and the accumulating proofs of the uniformity of natural laws, led to a demand among mystics for a system of philosophy that would reconcile the supernatural with the natural. This system was elaborately built up by Swedenborg, who wove earth, heaven and hell into a stupendous

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monism. His ideas gradually permeated orthodoxy, to a greater extent than has ever been acknowledged ; and prepared the minds of mystics for an acceptance of present-day signs and wonders.

In 1831 a craze for "animal magnetism" swept over the Eastern States. Seances were held by the hundred, and phenomena displayed that baffled the incredulous. Magnetic healers claimed to have forever conquered pain and disease ; and a number of charlatans posed as the "Messiahs" of the new revelations. One of these healers, who claimed to be a reincarnation of Melchizadek, lived in New York City, either on or near Fifth Avenue ; and reigned over his dupes with the capricious despotism of a Persian Shah. As I have been told, by a venerable New Yorker who remembers him, this prophet of the "new thought" compelled his followers to provide him with the daintiest of food. He demanded fruit

in mid-winter, as his "delicate spiritual organism" required such nourishment. Nothing is too absurd for the credulous. For a number of years "Melchizadek" retained his influence, and was obeyed as an infallible teacher by some of the wealthiest families in New York.

But "animal magnetism" did not die out. It was taken up by Swedenborgians who wanted proofs of the existence of a spiritual world, and blossomed afresh in the Spiritualism of to-day. So much sentiment has been woven around the absurd tricks of the mediums, that it is very probable that Spiritualism may continue for many years yet to gain adherents.

Following after Henry Ward Beecher, Parker and Channing, who strove to soften and humanize the harsh features of Puritanism, came Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, of Lynn. Beecher had said that religion must be practical and helpful to men and women in their troubles; and

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the Fourierists of the time proclaimed that the most of human ills were preventable. These ideas, reaching a sick woman whose only book was the Bible, naturally resulted in the birth of Christian Science, with its use of the Bible as a pharmacy, treasury and encyclopedia of practical knowledge.

And lastly, following after Emerson, mimicking and commercializing his philosophy of the supremacy of mind, comes Helen Wilmans with her Mental Science. Emerson, with the modesty of a genuine thinker, spoke of the phenomena of thought only. He never presumed to settle the problems of absolute being. But the Mental Scientists have had no such scruples; they have defined thought, matter, the soul and God. Nothing is left to conjecture; the universe is explained "while you wait." Scores of books, from the pens of Mrs. Wilmans, Henry Wood, Dresser, Trine, Patterson,

Tyner and others, have compounded a soporific mixture of Emerson's essays, "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas a Kempis, and Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health." In short, Mental Science is nothing but a belated survival of Bostonian metaphysics, fixed up for money-making purposes. It is transcendentalism with the genius and the dignity left out.

And so we see that every great discovery in the world of science and philosophy is followed and imitated by people of the impressionable sort. Just as the skilled acrobat is mimicked in the circus ring by the clown ; just as every successful and original novelist is followed by a "school" of trashy penny-a-liners ; and every master-artist by a crowd of daubers ; so every great progressive movement is parodied by a number of mystical cults, all ephemeral and irrational.

The result is that in the popular mind he original and the imitation are fre-

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quently confounded to the detriment of the former. For example, the sane and scientific study of psychological and psychical phenomena is discouraged and prevented to-day by the vast amount of quackery and superstition with which they have been connected. The evil done by this mystical backwash is in proportion to the general enlightenment, and it can be greatly diminished if met by what Buckle has called, "the voice of loud and general ridicule." As long as there are disciples, there will be Messiahs; as long as there are dupes there will be pretenders. Nothing can prevent these grotesque echoes of science save the upbuilding of a democracy of knowledge, in which every man and woman shall be a citizen.

The best cure for mysticism is fresh air, exercise, bromide of potassium, comic opera and the study of popular scientific and economic books. Cold baths and

brain-pills will also help to restore the patient to a normal condition. Sometimes six months hard work on a farm is most effective, or an active interest in the well-being of the under tenth in the great cities.

Every morbid tendency must be removed. Self-centred laziness must be replaced by the endeavor to do some practical service to the city or the nation. Mysticism must be overcome by the expulsive power of a practical interest in the progress of the world.

The hot-beds of these cults are the luxurious homes where indolence reigns, where the perfumed air is never jarred by the harsh noises that come from the real world of workers. Indolence and self-importance very naturally breed "religions" and "philosophies" that make the Creator a bell-boy. Socially speaking, mysticism will always remain until there is developed a more just economic system which shall link every individual to the everyday duties of life.

CHAPTER III.
THE RECRUDESCENCE OF MEDI-
EVALISM.

MODERN mysticism is essentially monastic. Its literature has been created by bringing Thomas a Kempis up to date,—modernizing him by a weak solution of Emerson and Darwin. It glorifies the passive and solitary virtues. It promises peace, repose, rest, freedom from annoyance and pain. Its inducements are the same as those offered seven hundred years ago, by Bernard of Clairvaux. It cries, "Come away from the noisy world. Enter into the silence. Trust thyself and the universe with God."

Almost the identical words and phrases are used by Mental Scientists and the

monks of the Dark Ages. For instance Dresser says: "Silence invites the greatest power in the world, the one Power, the one Life. Let us then be still. In this one restful happy moment we have won the peace of eternity and it is ours forever."

Archbishop Fenelon said: "Silence promotes the presence of God, humbles the mind and detaches it from the world." Thomas a Kempis said: "In solitude and silence the holy soul advances with speedy steps and learns the hidden truths of the oracles of God."

Again we find the same antagonism to reason, education and investigation. Dresser says: "The generally accepted opinions and education prevent one from getting into the higher state. Its own knowledge, its pride of intellect and assurance, make it difficult for the mind to surrender." Thomas a Kempis said: "Grace restrains the busy activity of the

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senses, suppresses the vain complacence and shuns the vainer ostentation of human learning." Fenelon said: "Beware of your own intellectual gifts and those of others. All that the world calls talent, taste and good reasoning is as naught." Charles Brodie Patterson says: "The mind originates nothing."

Modern Mental Science gives the same baseless hope to its members as Medievalism did with its doctrine of prayer. Dresser says: "God is here. Help is near. It abounds. It comes to us in proportion to our receptivity to it, our faith in it, our happiness, our hope, our patience." Everyone who has not been reared in a fool's paradise knows how impotent and vapid are such promises as these. The cheerful and persistent man will of course be more likely to attain his ends, whether financial or intellectual; but to assert that we are mothered by the "Infinite" when we are "good

children" is to perpetuate the same old lie that stands unmasked by millions of unanswered prayers. It is the ludicrous self-conceit which has been the core of every discredited religion since the first savage fled from his shadow.

Another "new thought" apostle says : "Suffering is intended to make men think." What is this but the restatement of one of the most damnable beliefs of the Dark Ages? It has for centuries given an excuse for the tyranny and torture of kings and priests. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth !"

Another mark of medievalism on modern mysticism is the intimate acquaintance that its writers and speakers have with the nature and habits of "God." They tell what he has been doing since the beginningless beginning, and what he will do until the endless end. In fact, most of the Mental Science books might be published under the title, "Heart to

heart talks with the Infinite." Dresser analyzes God as if God were a new species of beetle, and Dresser were an entomologist. He says: "God must have thought and desire, or some form of consciousness transcending what we denote by these words. He must reveal and know himself part by part, in order to know his total self." Again, "Since God is the All, He is all the love there is." Query, why not also all the hate and jealousy and rascality?

One of the most popular Mental Scientists, whose books are running through ten and twelve editions, gives the following lucid definition of God: "God is the knower and the known, the thinker and the thoughts, the builder and the built, the sustainer and the love which sustains, the limiter whose will we know as fate and as matter, without whom we are as naught, with whom as gods." Query, why not say, "God is the whole

thing," and have done with it? This rhapsody of a befogged brain is exactly similar to the ecstatic ravings of the medieval monks.

The following choice tid-bit of mysticism was written by a New York Mental Scientist, in a magazine which he uses mainly to advertise himself and his books. He says: "The other morning a strange dream—shall I call it a dream? a revelation? What shall I call it?—came to me just in the semi-waking hours, which seemed to symbolize a whole philosophy in itself. There seemed to stand all around me, enswathing me, an invisible presence which seemed to say, "I am all that exists, the One Infinite Spirit—Being—the Essence of Infinity and the Universe. There is nothing but Me; and You are Me; and I am You." Then I said, "If You are I, and I am You, what am I? What is my soul? Where am I? Where do I dwell?" And then

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came this marvelous utterance, which was almost like a revelation when it said, "Your soul is no more to you than is your body. Each is but a reflection of the Infinite All, and you stand over against me (who am but yourself), as my momentary reflection in the changing experiences of your individual life. You have always been; you always will be, because I Am forever from the beginning of beginnings unto the end of ends."

This spiritual cablegram reminds one very much of the nursery rhyme:

"Supposing I was you,
And supposing you was me,
And supposing we both were somebody else,
I wonder who we'd be!"

The only "marvelous utterance" which compares with it for lucidity of thought is that remark which was made by the rabbit in "Alice in Wonderland:" "Things often turn out to be different from what they would have been if they hadn't been otherwise than as you expected they were going to be."

This same magazine, published, mind you, not in the tenth century, or in Thibet, but in New York at the present time, gives the following advice to believers: "Rise on the wings of fancy and believe yourself rejoicing though your eyes are moist with suffering,—conceive yourself floating in the clouds though your body feel like lead,—see yourself triumphing over all obstacles though prisons enclose you,—realize in thought that you are free, free, free, though circumstances mock at courage and experience laughs at resolution. You *are* free—the earth has no devils who can conquer you, if you but dare to be as bold as Luther and hurl the inkstand of defiance at every mother's son of them that bobs up in your presence."

This mystical hysteria is, by many weak-minded people, confounded with the exhortations to self-reliance that came from the pens of Emerson and Carlyle.

It produces the same paralysis of the will and flabbiness of the character that was produced by the monasteries of the Middle Ages.

Mysticism invariably points in the direction of voodooism, Schlatterism, the blessing of handkerchiefs and the wearing of scapulas. For instance, a writer in a metaphysical magazine which is misnamed "Mind" says that "to feel a thing in your bones is to know it." Could any statement be more thoroughly medieval than this? The superiority of bones to brains! The cultivation of shin-perceptions! When in doubt, ask your elbow! What interesting new lines of thought will be opened up when the sect of Osteopathians is organized!

Another writer in the same magazine, Dec., '00, whose article is given the leading place, elaborates a philosophy of luck in card-playing. He declares that the "higher powers" enabled him always

to get the best hand when he was in proper psychical condition. He writes that he can foretell by psychic feeling when he is going to win, and narrates several instances in which he received extraordinary hands through divine influence.

Here is a hint for Pat Sheedy. The general moral of the article is,—never play poker with a Mental Scientist. Especially if you are an agnostic, the “higher powers” will have their revenge on you.

All the “new thought” books and magazines that I have seen, with the exception of some of Helen Wilman’s more aggressive screeds, are pervaded by that mystical devotional spirit which is incompatible with reason and critical judgment. They are Asiatic, not American. “What is new is not good, and what is good is not new.” The only differences between the monastic orders of a thou-

sand years ago and the mystical cults of to-day are those which a more enlightened public have made necessary.

Instead of sanctifying poverty and sickness, the Christian Scientist offers a scheme whereby believers only may be rescued from both. Instead of retiring from the world and herding with others in the woods, the modern mystic opens an office and retails occultism and vibrations for cash. Instead of spending eight hours a day on his knees before a plaster-of-Paris image, the twentieth century monk hammers a typewriter and publishes several books a year, for the sake of humanity and a ten per cent. royalty.

The mystic of to-day is by no means a St. Francis of Assisi so far as self-denial and voluntary poverty are concerned. He is in every instance a thorough commercialist, who prefers poverty for his friends rather than for himself. He stipu-

lates that his dupes shall pay him so much money for his lessons, lectures, treatments and books, and then bids them be free from worldly anxieties and cares.

Much may be said in excuse of St. Francis and Bernard and Loyola and Thomas a Kempis. In their day there was no outlet for enthusiasm save in religion and war. There were no schools, no libraries, no platform, no politics. The only activity allowed to men of reflection and earnest purpose was that of soul-saving. They were the natural product of a benighted and barbarous time. It was an age of ignorance and fear, and consequently one of piety and devotion and what Schleirmacher has called "God-consciousness."

But the modern American monk has no such apologies for his existence. He was educated at a secular public school. He had access to scientific and sociological books. He studied, or might have,

the higher branches of learning. No law checked his freedom of thought and expression. No infallible church compelled his allegiance. The fields of scientific research, of political reconstruction, of industrial organization, and of social experiment opened before him. Never since history began has there been such an opportunity to do great deeds, to think free thoughts, and to share in glorious discoveries.

Yet to most of these things the mystic of to-day is deaf and blind. He trundles his "soul" back to the fourteenth century. The chains have just been removed from his wrists and ankles, and the gag taken from his mouth, and the bandage from his eyes, and the door of his cell flung open, yet he sits still and clamors for "God" to help and heal and liberate him. Instead of springing to his feet and helping the brave men and women who are pulling down the old

Bastiles and superstition-factories, he moans dismally for "peace," "repose," "rest," and "harmony." Mentally enemic in every faculty, he is controlled by the delusion that he is a dispenser of perfect health. His mind totters feebly on the discarded crutches of Roman Catholicism, yet he cries out that he is a prophet and has a new message to this energetic and clear-headed generation.

He wanders about in a century not realized, as much of an anomaly as if he were a commercial traveller for a flint-and-steel and tinderbox company. He gathers about him those belated creatures who were born six hundred years too late, who would have listened agape with interest to the ravings of Peter the Hermit, not people who are necessarily reprehensible in conduct, but who are mentally unfit for this robust twentieth century. He and his little group form a nucleus of medievalism, not so ominous in numbers as in

the utterly non-rational and reactionary doctrines which they proclaim. They lay in wait near the church door, and bewilder with their sophistries those who are deserting the old edifice. They obstruct the roads to rationalism and good citizenship and social reform. And they so jumble up the language of ecclesiasticism with that of progress, that the newly emancipated slaves of orthodoxy are deceived, and led to embrace a type of religion which is even more ancient and useless than the one they have left behind.

Theosophy, Mental Science, Christian Science, Spiritualism, &c., are baby religions. Just as wild shrubs continue to spring up in well-tilled gardens as long as a single root is left undiscovered, so these mystical shrubs from the medieval swamps continue to endanger the plants of civilization. Only give these cults sufficient time and credulity, and they

would develop their Buddhas, Bibles, priesthoods, sacraments and Blue Laws.

The phenomena of present-day mysticism is very interesting to the student of comparative religions. He can observe how the dominant faiths of the world began. He can see how easy it was, before the invention of printing, photography and telegraphy, before the dawn of science and the development of commerce, to establish a religion based on miracles and prophecies. He can mark how inevitably the teachers of mystical doctrines ascend from one claim to another, until they believe themselves to be the appointed ambassadors of an infinite God. He can see how credulity breeds quackery, and how a "plan of salvation" dogmatic and exclusive, develops out of the hazy verbiage.

But there is no excuse for the revival of this St. Bernardism. If ever a religious type was fairly and thoroughly

tried, monasticism was. Not only since the founding of Christianity by Constantine, but for thousands of years before either Rome or Jerusalem were built, there were hundreds of monasteries, colonies and societies of religionists who talked like angels and who lived like pigs.

The beginnings of Hindoo monachism are so ancient as to be shrouded in mystery. When its history began to be written, it was called Brahmanism ; and when Buddha began to teach, B. C. 600, he found monks everywhere in India. The forests and mountains were as full of monks as of rabbits, living lives of unimaginable savagery. An ordinary Indian like Sitting Bull was a veritable Matthew Arnold when compared with the gymnosophists of India, Persia and Egypt.

They gathered together all known miseries, discomforts and indecencies, and formulated the most detestable code of

ethics ever known. They lived on roots and herbs like oxen, slept unprotected on the hard ground, and regarded even clothes as a "worldly pleasure." Worse than this,—a depth of insanity to which gorillas and apes have never sunk, they added to these miseries by scourging, lacerating and even mutilating themselves.

No lower creatures ever crawled through the woods and polluted the sunshine than these monks. They trampled on every joy of life, hated all beauty and gnashed their teeth at all art. Their delight was in grim and loathsome penances. Little children fled from these "men of God" in terror. They spat contempt upon family ties and obligations, and, centuries before Christ, they howled these savage words,—“If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be a favorite of God.”

If a monkey could write a book on evolution, he would have little trouble in disproving it by comparing the so-called lower animals with the monks of Christian and pre-Christian times. He could easily demonstrate the superiority of the monkey to the monk.

Every religion has developed such monastic tendencies. The Serapis temples in Egypt were made the abode of a multitude of monks, seeking for "peace" and "purity." Mahometanism has its regularly organized monastic orders, which are based on the mystical side of Islamism. Buddhism is essentially a form of monasticism, as it teaches that no one can attain the blessedness of Nirvana who has not lived for a time the monastic life. In the teachings of Confucius the ascetic tendencies are less conspicuous, and Chinese monks look rather to Buddha for light and inspiration. Judaism produced only the Essenes and

Nazarites. The Greeks and Romans escaped by their love of beauty and sturdy common sense from the dry-rot of monasticism. The Pythagoreans, Stoics and Cynics were guided by reason, not religion ; and were interested in the welfare of the State. So it is altogether improper to class them, as religious historians do, with any of the monastic orders.

As for Christianity, it is essentially an extreme type of monachism. This is fully admitted by Professor A. G. McGiffert, of Union Theological Seminary, New York. He declares : "There were peculiar reasons within the church itself why monachism should find a home on Christian soil, and have the most remarkable and elaborate development it has anywhere enjoyed. It is a natural result of the ideal of the Christian life which prevailed in the church almost from the beginning, and which had its roots in the

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teachings of Christ himself. It was inevitable that the ties of friendship, of family, of property, of citizenship, should have been regarded as hindrances to the highest spirituality, viewed with suspicion and ultimately repudiated."

Not only is this strictly accurate, but it is also true that Christianity added to monasticism the most dreadful of all its horrors,—the frenzied doctrine of a furious God and a blazing hell. Monasticism rose and fell with the ups and downs of the Roman Catholic church, both attaining their Golden Age in the thirteenth century.

Although the monasteries have been examined under a microscope by all Christian theologians, who have searched everywhere for traces of intellect or utility, very little of either has been discovered. The monks are said to have been the custodians of learning, but it is undeniable that they destroyed what they

did not like, and interpolated the rest to such an extent that authenticity has become a guess. They are said to have promoted an unselfish and simple spirit, but in medieval Europe, as in the Phillipines to-day, the greater part of the land was in their possession. They are defended as the upholders of peace and chastity in a brutal age, but every historian admits that the monasteries were commonly used as fortresses, military camps and dens of the most shameful gluttony and vice. Many a monastery and nunnery might very appropriately have burned a red light in front of its door.

Those who remained chaste and self-restrained went to a preposterous extreme. Simeon Stylites, immortalized by Tennyson, lived for thirty years on the top of a pillar in Syria, during the fifth century. No doubt he chose his uncomfortable position in order not to miss the first glint

of Christ's Second Coming, which every monk daily expected. Others boasted that they had not seen their own bodies for years. Some orders, such as the Flagellants, were bound by vows never to speak to a woman.

To enumerate the insane lengths to which their misguided passion for holiness led them would require volumes. But there is one fault of which every monk without exception was guilty,—the anti-social and anti-civilized fault of intemperance. They were intemperate in both their virtues and their vices. They transformed ordinary vices into bestialities, and ordinary virtues into manias. No people were ever, as a class, farther from sanity and common sense than the monks and nuns of the Middle Ages. No type of mind was ever so unfitted for the pursuits of science and commerce and politics and all the activities that concern the modern world.

Whole generations and even centuries passed without the production of a single monastic inventor, mathematician, statesman, astronomer or philosopher. And when the centuries were most devoid of genius the monasteries were most numerous. The minds of the monks and nuns were so stupified by mystical rubbish that they worked like automata, preferring tasks that were monotonous to those that required the exercise of thought. They opposed with slander and persecution every step of progress that has made civilization possible. Had Europe been obedient to their example, America would to-day have remained undiscovered, and the midnight of the eleventh century would have been indefinitely prolonged.

For eleven hundred years they were the custodians and copyists of manuscripts. Thousands and thousands of them toiled at the work of transcribing the ancient writings with a Chinese pa-

tience and imitativeness that was amazing, and that has been loudly praised by church historians. But not a monk ever thought of printing. Coster, who first invented wooden types, was not a monk. Pfister, Fust, Castaldi, Mentol, Valdfoghel and others who claimed equal honors with Coster, were secular tradesmen. John Guttenberg, who added a number of improvements to type-making, was a business man. William Caxton, who introduced printing into England in 1476, was a merchant. The complete history of the discovery and development of printing might be written without the slightest reference to any monk or monastery. So simple an idea as that of movable types did not occur to any religious copyist during a period of over eleven centuries.

When the first books were shown to them, they regarded the printed pages with a savage's wonder and fear, declar-

ing that the devil was the author of the new "magic art." Had it not been for the growing power of commercialism, which since the fifteenth century has protected the inventor and explorer, there is little doubt that Guttenberg and his fellows would have met the same fate as befel Giordano Bruno.

As another evidence of the non-progressive-ness of the monastic type of mind, look at the record of the monks as farmers. Five hundred years before the Christian era, there were monks who tilled the soil. For fifteen hundred years the monasteries farmed the fields of Europe. Yet not one agricultural implement in use in America to-day owes its invention to the monks. They labored as unthinkingly as oxen with their rude spades and wooden plows, sowing the grain by hand just as the first ape-man did. At the present day, the devout peasantry of Europe and the French

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Catholics of Quebec use the same rude implements as their forefathers. On the other hand, the lay farmers of America, unhindered by any "divine guidance," have in two hundred and fifty years perfected the most elaborate and scientific system of agriculture ever known. Instead of the wooden plow and the hand spade they have invented the steam-plow and harrow, the automatic seeder, harvester, binder and thresher, the milk separator, and a host of handy labor-saving contrivances.

Every year, in the United States alone, our farmers buy 125,000 self-binders and 175,000 mowers. We have fifty agricultural colleges and sixty government experiment stations. Agricultural chemistry, a science unknown prior to the nineteenth century, is now engaging the attention of brilliant thinkers, and being popularized through the medium of over three hundred farmers' papers and maga-

zines in America alone. The farmer of to-day has also the conveniences of the railroad, the telephone, the grain elevator, the bicycle and the trolley-car, and nothing save political stupidity and disunion prevents him from being the most independent and happy man on earth.

Every other art and industry existed unchanged in the monasteries, like seeds in frozen soil. Every new idea and practical suggestion, if by accident they had either, was regarded by the monks as a worldly thought to be driven from the mind by prayer and fasting. Architecture and painting alone survived, the only two activities of the Middle Ages that were worthy of human brains, and both of these were made the bond-slaves of superstition. Again and again the cathedrals have been pointed out as conclusive evidence of the moral grandeur of medievalism ; but it should be remembered that they were built for no useful purpose.

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The craze for cathedral building started just after the year 1,000 A. D., in a spasm of gratitude because the world had not come to an end as had been expected. From the point of view of structural skill there are in Ceylon and Central America the ruins of buildings which are far more worthy of our wonder. In regard to real utility, the sky-scraper of New York and Chicago is infinitely better entitled to our approval.

In short, there was nothing in monasticism that the world of to-day cannot spare with pleasure. At the very best, considering it with the utmost toleration, it was a mistake by which Europe lost the pathway of progress for fifteen hundred years. Those who are now resurrecting the monastic ideal, with its irrational paraphernalia of spirits, mediums, miracles, mahatmas, faith-cures, God-messages and soul-culture,—with its passion for solitude and silence, its contempt for the

physical and the practical, its devout fatalism and its bad citizenship, are promoting tendencies which are subversive of every civilized institution.

After years of impartial investigation and study, I have been forced to the conclusion that Mental Science, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Theosophy, and all kindred occult, astrological and "spiritual" sects are nothing better than the recrudescence of medievalism,—the outbreak of the same disease of the brain that afflicted Europe so that she lay at the point of death for centuries, and from which Asia has never recovered. Thousands of well-meaning and lovable people have been deluded by it, and it is to assist in preventing others from following in their steps that these pages have been written.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

CHRI**S**TIAN Science is a mixture of Hegelianism, medieval faith-cure-ism and orthodoxy. As Mrs. Eddy says: "The cardinal point in Christian Science is that there is no matter,—that all is mind."

From this harmless metaphysical platitude she proceeds to deduce all manner of irrational precepts for the regulation of the everyday affairs of life. She brought metaphysics from the clouds, where it belongs, to the earth, where it does nothing but mischief. In this she resembles the half-witted father who attended a lecture on evolution. He listened attentively to the theory of the "survival

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of the fittest," and when he reached home promptly put his invalid child to death, thinking that thereby he was aiding the processes of nature.

Christian Science is based on a deductive theological scheme. The deductive process requires a perfect knowledge of the whole field of thought, to be valid. Every careful scientist looks upon deductive methods with suspicion, whereas they have been the delight of the ignorant in all ages.

In the manufacture of religions, the deductive paths of reasoning always lead from the "Infinite" to "Me." They are invariably constructed by self-conceit and that intense egotism that makes the unbalanced brain. For instance, in a signed statement of belief given by Mrs. Eddy to "Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia," she begins her statement with the sentence, "Christian Science is the science of God and his universe, including man." She concludes with this sen-

tence, "In 1894 the Boston Church completed a beautiful edifice, as a Testimonial to the writer of this. It cost, including the land, nearly \$250,000."

This is a typical specimen of egotism, rarely found outside of Sanitariums. From God to Me ! From the universe to My Church in Boston ! How vague at one end, and how specific at the other ! Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, including the land !

Livingstone, the African explorer relates that on one occasion, while in a negro village, he was attracted to the door of his tent by the noisy antics of a medicine-man. The latter was weaving spell after spell around the tent, and chanting unintelligible prayers intermingled with wild shrieks and groans. Livingstone's companion was inclined to be alarmed, but the great Scotch traveller saw at a glance the real meaning of the holy man's religious frenzy. He fastened several strings of beads and some

red cotton cloth on the end of a stick, and extended it towards the medicine-man. That worthy mystic needed no persuasion, but at once seized his booty, and rushed off with long leaps to his cabin. All his prayers and spells and incantations simply meant, "I want beads and cloth."

This voodooism has been refined, not abolished. To-day instead of the medicine-man we have the anti-medicine men and women, who sell incantations and lectures on the Infinite for so many dollars per lesson. In one form after another, the hucksters who peddle the incomprehensible for beads or cash are always with us. No matter what progress we make, we can't lose them. They are always lurking in the dark corners; and as soon as the light of inductive science is turned on them, they rush like crickets to find another hiding-place among the shadows.

In ancient times, and during the Middle Ages, these occult sects were savagely opposed to science and freedom of thought. Frequently they were even more rabid than the orthodox in denouncing "heretics." But at the present day they show the wonderful adaptability of superstition by embracing the very name of science. The modern prophet poses, not as an enemy of education and invention and progress ; but as one who has evolved beyond the petty limits of a college training, beyond the discoveries and learning of this backward civilization, into the upper realm of intuition and infallibility.

Without having studied science, he has got above it. Without having spent a day in a chemical laboratory, he knows more about matter than all the chemists. Without having read a book on psychology or brain diseases, he knows more about mind than all the specialists. Without even knowing the location of

the various organs of the body, he can heal incurable diseases.

His attitude toward science, therefore, has become one of pitying contempt. He has discovered the "royal road to learning,"—the short-cut past books, experiments, laboratories and experience. As a Christian Science "Healer" testified in a New York court, he had spent six years studying to be a doctor, two years to be a dentist, and *twelve days* to be a "Healer." With this rapid transit method of education, why have universities any more? It used to be possible to secure a degree from pseudo colleges by studying half-a-dozen books and paying fifty dollars; but now one can be a "Healer" by simply paying the money and listening to a few lectures on the everlasting Whatnot.

All modern mystical cults, however, condescend to use scientific words and phrases. They seize upon every new

discovery as a means of illustrating their claims. No sooner had the Roentgen rays been explained to the public, than a number of clairvoyants issued fresh sets of circulars, in which they declared themselves to be possessed of X-ray sight. The invention of wireless telegraphy was at once seized upon to prove the "Healers'" doctrine of absent treatment of disease.

Every "Healer" and mystical "reformer" claims to be ahead of his times. He poises as a pioneer of a higher civilization,—an advance-agent of the twentieth century. He peddles his "Asiatic mildew," as T. B. Wakeman has termed it, under the name of "new thought." And many people who should have known better have been deceived by these protestations. For instance, the *New York Morning Journal*, Feb. 28, '01, contains the following editorial on Christian Science :

“Christian Science is simply one of many manifestations of the innate protest against materialism and material conditions.

“There is not the slightest doubt that the soul is the only element of importance. There is not the slightest doubt that this soul should control the body absolutely. Thus far, in our semi-savage state, our material bodies have been allowed to control the mind and soul.

“The evolution toward ultimate spiritual control must be slow. Progress toward the condition in which intelligent knowledge will control disease must also be slow.

“Christian Scientists are ahead of their time. They are too sanguine, too intolerant, perhaps, sometimes. Like all who earnestly advocate an idea fundamentally true, they go too far and preach the impossible.

“But there is no doubt that already the action of the mind does more to conquer pain than is done by all the world's medicines.

“How much more is done for suffering children by the soothing mental influence of a loving mother than by all the medicine in the world.

“If a child falls and hurts itself the doctor has no relief for him short of a horrible dose of morphine. By a mother’s influence, a few affectionate words from her can instantly change the child’s tears to smiles and persuade him that he is actually not suffering.

“Is not that the substance of Christian Science? In a few short years, early in our era, tens of thousands of Christian martyrs died, not only free from pain, but in a delirium of happiness. Their belief in God, their religious instinct, absolutely conquered pain and made it non-existent. Certainly Christian Science was there applied.

“Of course, the Christian Scientist who pretends to cure a broken leg, consumption, hip disease or any other definite material illness by faith is a dangerous quack. He should be regulated by law, and, if necessary, imprisoned like any other person practising medicine illegally and dangerously.

“But we do not believe that Christian Science in itself is a harmful belief, or that it implies mental weakness.”

To begin with, it should be noticed that the ideal "Christian Science in itself" does not exist, as a matter of fact. Every Christian Scientist believes that consumption, hip disease, cancer, &c., can be cured by thought, and is, therefore, a "dangerous quack" who should be "regulated by law and if necessary imprisoned."

Christian Science is not a "protest against materialism." It is a protest against civilization. It would overthrow every ladder by which our nation has climbed up out of fourteenth century savagery. The men who are effectually protesting against materialism are the inventors, engineers and mechanics who are making the material world obedient to human thought. It is the thought of Edison and Roebing and such men, not the "thought" of Mrs. Eddy, that is making matter subject to mind.

Christian Science has not added one

fact to our knowledge of the human brain, nor helped in the slightest degree to make the forces of nature subservient to the mind. Its creed teaches that the reason must be passive, not active. It cuts away the props of self-help and inventive ingenuity, which raise us above the level of uncivilized nations.

“Materialism,” in the objective sense, is to be removed by the development and organization of industry, so that our material wants will occupy only a small share of our attention. It will be overcome by the abolition of poverty and ostentatious luxury, and by the increasing desire for scientific, artistic and literary pursuits.

The Christian Science plan was seen at its best in the monasteries of the Middle Ages, which are elsewhere described. They are the best possible illustration of the fact that wherever the mystical idea of making the “soul” superior to the

body has prevailed, men have had little or no control of material forces. The more "spiritual" the less intellectual. Whenever the "soul" has absolutely controlled the body, as among the adepts of India and the saints of the twelfth century, the material conditions of these "spiritual" men have been swinish to an unprecedented degree.

As to the hallucinations of the early Christian martyrs, we find such phenomena in every asylum, and have not regarded them as any sort of evidence for many years. The sympathy of the mother for the injured child is, of course, helpful and rational; but no mother would allow a cut on her child's finger to be unbound, nor offer sympathy as a substitute for sticking plaster; so that there is no close analogy between her and the Christian Scientist who defiantly ignores sanitary precautions and medical assistance.

The Christian Scientist is not the

champion of the mind as against the body. He represents a mysticism that has always and everywhere made war upon mind. His doctrine is of no more assistance to intellectual activity than chloroform, and is certain to produce sooner or later the decay of the reflective powers. No one is further behind his age and more out of place in America than the faith-curist and mystic.

Shortsighted critics who say that modern mysticism is a natural and healthy reaction from materialism do not see that these mystical sects are based upon a gross conception of mental activities. Mental Science and Christian Science are crude endeavors to translate thought-life into the language of chemistry and physics. Ideas are treated as if they were sticks and stones. "Thoughts" are bought and sold like coal and potatoes,—much more frequently sold than delivered.

It is essentially a commercializing and degrading of mentality.

When the Mental Healer uses the word "thought" he means something entirely different from the true conception of the word. He does not mean the mental activity of such men as Darwin, Carlyle, Lecky, Edison and Spencer. He means a sort of electric will-force that is supposed to be generated by people with certain psychic powers. These people may never have originated an idea in their lives. Their brains may be undeveloped and their memories stored with trivialities. Yet, in the language of the Mental Healers, they may be giving out thousands of thought-volts every week. Nothing can be further from the truth than to assert that these mystics are the champions of brain development.

The resemblance between the "arguments" of Mrs. Eddy and the quips of the Grecian Sophists is very striking. For instance, Mrs. Eddy says: "Pain

cannot exist where there is no mortal mind to feel it ; therefore the mind makes its own pain." This is similar to that cheap metaphysical quibble circulated among High School graduates and freshmen, that "there is no sound where there is no ear to hear it." Mrs. Eddy's inference would be, "therefore it is the ear that makes the noise." Likewise it would be the eye that makes the stars, and the hand and eye that make the stone, and the palate that makes the pickles. Metaphysically speaking, this is profound discernment ; practically speaking, it is preposterous.

Again, Mrs. Eddy says, "which was first, Mind or medicine? If Mind was first, and self-existent, then Mind, not matter, must have been the first medicine." As we poor little human bipeds have no knowledge of "Mind" which does not work through matter, and therefore through something which may be medicinal, her brilliant syllogism is a waste of genius.

“Drugs are stupid substitutes for the dignity and potency of divine Mind,” says Mrs. Eddy. Very likely. A good many human contrivances are “stupid substitutes” for the real thing. Legs are “stupid substitutes” for wings. So are trains, steamboats and trolley-cars. Newspapers are “stupid substitutes” for divine omnipresence, and colleges for divine omniscience. A nine-room cottage in Brooklyn is a “stupid substitute” for a celestial mansion. A steam-hammer is a “stupid substitute” for omnipotence. An electric bell is a “stupid substitute” for Aladdin’s lamp.

We would all like to have a god to wait upon us, but if he is not forthcoming, we must shift for ourselves. Moreover, in our short human experience, we have learned that self-help is the mainspring of progress.

There is no better illustration of this than the contrast between Spain and the

United States. For three hundred years Spain has trusted the "divine Mind" to manage its affairs, and the result has been complete national decay. Spain refused the "stupid substitutes" of civilization, and to-day it is absolutely destitute of intellectual or industrial life. Mrs. Eddy would find Seville a much more congenial city than Concord or Boston.

On the other hand, this country has been built up by self-help and human ingenuity. Even our religionists have a saying that "Heaven helps those who help themselves." We have gone ahead and piled up one "stupid substitute" after another, while the nations who trusted in the "divine Mind" have remained without either the substitute or the real thing.

As to drugs, there is no doubt that many of them are stupid enough, but, as I have elsewhere shown, they are a vast improvement upon the decoctions that are

administered in Spain and other countries over which faith reigns. In proportion as medical practice has been emancipated from religion, it has become wiser and more successful.

It is not to be expected that medical science should in a hundred years overcome the prejudices of over twenty centuries. The main thing to know is that it has at last found the path that leads to knowledge, and has ceased to flounder about in the wilderness of faith and fetichism. It has done more, perhaps, than any other branch of knowledge to prolong human life and add to the sum total of our knowledge of health.

In a signed statement give to the *New York World* on Feb. 22, '01, Mrs. Eddy says: "A drug cannot of itself go to the brain or affect cerebral conditions in any manner whatever. According to his belief, a man can be helped or he can be killed by a drug. Drugs cannot remove

inflammation, restore disordered functions, or destroy disease without the aid of mind." If this be so, then a rustic Christian Scientist may, when he visits New York, blow out the gas and suffer no ill effects, except when he is presented with an extra gas-bill in the morning. The Christian Scientist who meddles with a gun or revolver, and "didn't know it was loaded," will find his flesh as impervious to the bullet as the hide of an alligator. The "Healer" who gets up at night for a drink of whiskey and swallows a pint of carbolic acid by mistake will never feel the difference. The Christian Scientist somnambulist who falls out of a five-story window will float to the pavement as lightly as a leaf, and so forth. This doctrine opens the door to more wonderful miracles than any that are described in the Bible, the Arabian Nights, or Munchausen's Travels.

Tea, coffee, musk, camphor, ether and

chloroform, which hitherto have "affected cerebral conditions," become shorn of their distinctive qualities. We may use chloroform as a stimulant and a glass of buttermilk as an anesthetic, if we only think so. We may perhaps even be enabled to sit on a rug, a la Aladdin, and say, "This is a Pullman car en route for San Francisco," and thus bankrupt the Railroad Trust.

Roman Catholic Cardinals, it is said, have been known to stretch their hands over the roast beef at a Friday dinner, and by saying, "I pronounce this to be fish," they have been able to eat without suffering indigestion or the loss of the divine favor. But Mrs. Eddy goes much farther than the Cardinals in this "Presto, change" trick. According to her statement, every drug is only what each person thinks it is. All the discoveries in chemistry have thus been chimerical. Every laboratory has been founded on a

delusion. What science has been offering us as a cosmos, is, according to Mrs. Eddy, a chaos of hallucinations. We can grow fat on a diet of chopped glass and Paris green ; or we can be poisoned by a crumb of bread. Such is the gospel of the Concord prophetess.

In Christian Science dreams have an important place. Mrs. Eddy says : "Christian Science defines soul and dreams. Dreams are the conscious and unconscious states of matter ; wherein the night dream is quite as real and tangible as the day dream ; for Life or mind in matter is a dream at all times, and is never the reality of being." Thus in Christian Science the dream reaches its highest pinnacle of honor. Everything in the physical universe becomes but "the baseless fabric of a vision."

In all ages dreams have been the most prolific source of superstition. One of the best tests of rationality is to ask, "What

do you think of dreams?" Whoever regards them as having any educational value is still among the superstitious. Dreams form a link between the lowest stages of fetichism and the modern phases of mysticism. The medicine-man derives a good revenue from the interpretation of dreams; and among the religious people of all nations there are lucky and unlucky dreams. In my boyhood I was taught that to dream of a white horse was a sure sign of a death in the family. But it has been left for Christian Science to elevate dreams to the level of the most definite experiences of our waking hours.

Christian Science touches the lowest depths of fetichism. A Denver "Healer" actually claims to have imparted divine power to his house. He says:

"Since I came into this house I have been treating it regularly every day for three hours a day. You can't touch a piece of furniture without feeling an electric shock. You can go up stairs in the Healing Room

after dark, and anything you touch in the room will send forth a blue flame of electric light. I am going to make this house the Center of the planet for the healing of all kinds of diseases."

This same charlatan, who is maintaining two establishments and brazenly admits it, gives the following statement of his powers:

"I am a follower of the Spirit Christ. I am not walking in darkness. I have the light of life.

"I heal the sick.

"I cleanse the lepers.

"I cast out devils.

"I even raise the dead.

"I am doing these things every day, and am growing stronger and stronger in this power of the Whole Spirit. I am not doing these things in the way I expected, when I began the work, but I am doing them all the same. I am doing greater things than Jesus Christ did while he was on earth. I am doing my work in all parts of the earth. His work was confined to a small district in an obscure part of the world. I am doing just what he said the Spirit Christ

would do. I speak the Word of Truth in the Silence and heal all manner of sickness. I have patients in London, Rome, Vienna, and in all parts of Europe.

“The only defect in the treatments at present is that they are not instantaneous. They ought to be. The time is coming when I will speak one Word in the Silence and the patient will be healed from that hour.”

There are enough dupes in this land of free schools and libraries to simply rain money upon this impostor. In mystical circles I have noticed that he who claims to do the biggest things has the most followers. The only two requisites are imagination and impudence.

The “Healers” of America claim to have healed over two million cases of sickness. While this claim is stupendous, it is not as large as that made by Cotton Mather on behalf of the witchcraft superstition. So we need not be awed or in any way convinced by it. The fact is that in these days of artificial and imaginary

diseases, healing is a cheap thing. There are as many kinds of ways to get well as there are to get sick. Healing is like primitive poetry,—as Kipling says :

“There are nine and ninety ways
Of writing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right.”

If some philanthropic millionaire were to found a common sense hospital, in which patients would receive neither mysticism nor drugs,—the former more injurious to the mind than the latter are to the body, it is my belief that he could cure a larger proportion of patients than either doctors or healers, by simply furnishing plenty of fresh air, baths, companionship, exercise, music, fun, buttermilk and plain food.

Even admitting the Christian Science list of cures, it is very probable that the cures could have been effected by wiser methods, and without the inculcation of medieval errors which are certain to create intellectual diseases. Until it has been

shown that all rational methods have been tried without success, a Christian Science cure has little value as evidence.

Moreover, it might very easily be shown that the lowering of the death-rate by hygienic and sanitary precautions has prevented more sickness than Christian Science claims to have cured. Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and other British cities reduced the death-rate one half in the over-crowded portions of the cities, by pulling down unhealthy buildings and letting in sunlight and air. New York has done the same in several parts of the East Side, though exact figures cannot be obtained. The average death-rate in this country is about 18 per 1,000, while in Italy it is 28, in Austria 30, and in Hungary nearly 34. The healthiest countries in the world are Norway and Sweden, where the people are more apt to obey natural laws, and are

troubled with neither mysticism nor drugs. Their death-rate is 17 per 1,000.

The fact is, that the human constitution has wonderful recuperative energies, and in my opinion has generally had to contend against both the remedy and the disease. If people had done as the dogs do when they are sick,—lie under a barn and rest, there would probably have been as many of them cured. In other words, the only thing that should be done is to give your wronged constitution a chance to right itself, helping it only by giving it favorable conditions.

Of all the panaceas in sight, no doubt the best one is sleep; and if this be so, it entirely disproves the faith-healers' theories. Their creed maintains that an active mind is the best aid to physical weakness; while in sleep the mind is non-resistant and quiescent.

The doctrine of *laissez faire*, which has been made so prominent in political econ-

omy, might be far better applied to medical science than to economics. Doctors are rapidly coming over to this opinion, as the growth of homeopathy and the bread-pill idea very plainly show. For nine-tenths of the "cures" hitherto effected by doctors and healers, nature alone deserves the credit. Just as nations have survived in spite of suicidal legislation, and morality persisted in spite of all ecclesiastical onslaughts, so the sturdy human organism has survived all the deadly medical and mystical experiments that have been made upon it.

Among the farmers, who are not generally "in tune with the infinite," and whose only medicine is simple "kitchen physic," the death-rate is always lowest. For every one hundred deaths among the English farmers there are one hundred and twenty in English cities, among equal numbers living. The urban death-rate in France is twenty-five per thou-

sand, as against only twenty-one among the rural population.

So, all things considered, the Christian Science and Mental Science list of "cures" is not as convincing as it at first appears. Lourdes and St. Ann de Beaupre can doubtless show as many, yet only the most benighted make pilgrimages to their shrines in this age. Every fallacy, whether medical or mystical, may have found thousands ready to bear witness to its efficacy, but truth is never a matter of majorities or numbers.

Among all the more primitive forms of religion the priests have claimed to have a mystical power over disease. The priests of Osiris and Isis were "Healers." So were the Assyrian priests of Gibel, and the Grecian priests of Esculapius. The medicine-men among the Indians monopolized the medical profession, treating the sick with incantations and decoctions of herbs. The latter did the

healing and the former got the credit. Most of the historic Saviours and Messiahs have been "Healers" and wonder-workers.

So it was by no accident that the Christian church of the Middle Ages promoted the healing of the sick by faith. Given a certain amount of superstition, and healing by faith or by prayer inevitably follows. The failure of patients to be cured has never of itself overcome this belief. Failure was blamed upon their own lack of faith, not upon the "Healer" or the shrine. Not more than ten per cent. of the pilgrims who go to Lourdes are cured; the remaining ninety per cent. bewail their unbelief.

Lourdes is like the almanac which is thought by farmers to be marvelously accurate in its predictions if it foretell a couple of storms during the year. One hit atones for a score of misses.

It is very commonly noticed that health, like happiness, is one of the things about


which people seldom philosophize except when it is impaired. A great quantity of mind-cure literature is written by men and women who are enemic as well as sentimental. It springs from a morbid mental state that has been induced by some chronic organic disorder. Such writers are like the man in Hogarth's picture, who, though incarcerated in the debtors' prison, entirely forgot his condition in the elaboration of a plan for paying off the National Debt. The average faith-curist belongs to the same class as the prayer-meeting saint who maltreats his wife, the fierce Marxian who howls and wrangles for brotherhood, and the tramp who offers you "Five Hundred Ways to get Rich" for ten cents.

The world, or at least the sensible fraction of it, has no respect for theories without accomplishment. If these "Live Forever Clubs" expect to win favor, their members must quit dying. As soon as

they can produce a bevy of hale old centenarians who can dance and sing and turn handsprings, they will have proved their case and won universal regard.

From the psychological standpoint, these mind-healers have no scientific basis for their theories. Where are the Christian Science laboratories? What is the Christian Scientists' standard book on pathology and physiology? If thoughts cause disease, where is the classification of thoughts and diseases? What particular idea causes cancer? Will the idea of lobster-salad cause indigestion? If we are to have mysticism, at least let us have a mystical cosmos, so that we shall have some sign-posts by the way.

If matter is but an idea and an illusion, where is the scientific table of illusions, showing us how we may choose our favorite brand and get what we order? What Christian Science book on mind and matter is recognized as authorita-



tive by the colleges or by any eminent scientist?

Are any diseases necessary? Are some more obstinate than others? When is it necessary to call in a surgeon? When does the mind become strong enough to practice mind-healing? Can a baby heal itself? Can a child? Can a lunatic? If, as Christian Scientists claim, a "Healer" can heal a cow, can a cow heal a "Healer?" Or, what brain tests are required of adepts?

If "thought is a substance," explain that substance. How does a substance differ from a force, or a material "illusion?" Is music a substance? Is light a substance? Should not the phenomena of the "real" world of spirit be at least as orderly as the phenomena of the "unreal" world of matter?

How do Mental Healers define catalepsy, hysteria, hypnotism and psychical epilepsy? This is very important, because,

until the "Healers" explain these, these explain the "Healers."

One of the founders of Mental Science thus describes how thought can mould the body and cure disease: "There is an ethereal substance, molecular in structure, in which our minds are bathed, finer than electricity or the luminiferous ether, penetrating all physical bodies, and responding to the slightest possible change of thought. It may be conceived as a wonderfully sensitive impression plate, jelly-like in texture. It supplies the connection between spirit and matter and partakes of both." What proof have we of this ethereal jelly? Before what group of scientific men has this been demonstrated?

As Helen H. Gardener observed recently to the writer, "Among mystics, words have no par value, therefore debate with them is impossible." Their delight is to use those inexact words which every

true scientist abhors,—words which have as many meanings as they have users. All mystics display the utmost skill in avoiding clear and definite statements. If words were but coined, like currency, with the precise value stamped indelibly upon each, mysticism would become extinct, or at least inarticulate. The radical trouble is that the haziness which is shown in human language exists primarily in human brains.

A New York Christian Scientist recently declared in the law-court that she could continue to live even if all the blood were drawn from her body. Doctor Allen McLane Hamilton, the noted alienist, very properly said that “no sane person could have such a belief.” In every asylum there are patients who have similar delusions, but who are apparently normal in every other respect. One thinks he is made of glass ; another believes himself to be Alexander the Great ;

and a third asserts that he is the richest man in the world. There is not an asylum in America that does not contain "Prophets," "saints," "Messiahs," and "Deities."

The difference between the insane and the extremely religious has in all countries and ages been very slight. Nothing saves many a devout revivalist from a sanitarium but the fact that insanity is practically a matter of majority rule. It has been very amusing to the agnostic to follow the recent law-suits in which Christian Scientists have been involved, and observe how difficult it is for the judge to keep the Bible and the early Christians out of the case. If it is a mark of insanity to believe that pneumonia and consumption can be cured by reading a chapter of Mrs. Eddy's book, then what shall be said of those that believe that a man who had been three days dead was restored to life, or that five thousand hungry people

were well fed on five loaves and two small fishes?

However, this is not the question that we are at present discussing, and it is only mentioned to show that the strength of Christian Science lies in the similarity between its delusions and others which are still popularly believed. Anyone who would attempt to re-establish a religion that is entirely dead, — Cabalism, Molochism, Gymnosophy or phallic worship, would be promptly lodged in an asylum. But when the new sect merely carries some phase of orthodoxy to a grotesque and outgrown extreme, judges, alienists and clergy are perplexed, and fear to take any decisive action.

Generally speaking, the sane man does not allow his mind to dwell upon the eternal and the infinite. He does not believe that he is a deity, or the favored pet of a Mahatma. He does not rhapsodize; he thinks. He does not pray; he

acts. He does not "hitch his wagon to a star;" he invents an automobile. He does not say, "All is good;" but "I can help to make several things much better." He is neither the fool of his body, like the sensualist; nor the fool of his imagination, like the mystic. He is, in short, the Practical Positivist, who knows that whenever a foundation-stone is placed on the sand of superstition, it and all that rests upon it must sooner or later be torn down.

The mind is not built in compartments. Like the body, it is an organism. Every irrational belief must endanger the intellectual balance. At first the mental flaw may not be noticeable, but after a few years it cannot be hidden. The poise of the mind is destroyed. The critical faculties are benumbed; and before long irrational belief is followed by irrational action.

If we are to perpetuate myths and ghost

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stories forever, as the "foundations of morality," old myths are better than new ones, because they take less of our time and devotion. In all matters of mysticism, it is earnestness and sincerity that most endanger usefulness and sanity. From the standpoint of intellect and progress, the most formal ritualism is vastly to be preferred.

CHAPTER V.

THE VICTORY OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

MEDICAL science is altogether an achievement of the nineteenth century. It is in many respects still incomplete ; for the church allowed no one to build on the broad and solid foundations laid by Hippocrates, until little more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

It has been governed too much by precedent, though to a less extent than the ecclesiastical and legal professions. Like all professions, it has been burdened with learning and scant of knowledge. It has masked ignorance with professional pride. It has, perhaps, studied the dead body too much, and the living creature not enough. It has laid too much em-

phasis on the stomach and the liver, and not enough on the mind and the affections. It has spent too much time in studying minerals, and too little in studying *human nature*. It has under-rated the self-healing processes of nature, and the physical effects of joy and sorrow. It has somewhat overlooked the social and mental causes of health and disease, and thus given a foundation for mental-healing quackery to build upon.

But, in the short time in which it has been free from ecclesiastical and mystical hindrances, medical science has accomplished a work which entitles it to the respect of every lover of progress and health. It has placed the study of disease upon a rational basis, which alone is a stupendous achievement. It has discovered new methods of investigation, especially in the fields of bacteriology and pathology. Its methods of diagnosis have been improved beyond those of any

preceding age. The use of the clinical thermometer has revolutionized medical practice. The stethoscope makes known diseases of the heart and lungs ; while the test-tube and microscope detect irregularities in the kidneys. By means of the wonderful Roentgen rays, all flesh becomes as glass, and foreign substances are discovered and removed.

Medical science has done most of all to hasten the happy time "when there shall be no more pain," by its discoveries of anesthetics. It has introduced methods of disinfection which make plagues a forgotten horror, and practically abolished yellow fever, small-pox, cholera, and a dozen other diseases once regarded as inevitable curses of the human race.

During the last thirty years surgery has again and again achieved what had been considered impossible. Especially in the case of tumors and diseases of the abdominal organs, the work of the

surgeon has been most brilliant, and best of all, it has been painless. The horrors of the operating-room, previous to the use of anesthetics, have been entirely abolished; so that to-day gentle-natured young women are becoming surgeons.

The medical profession contains a number of quacks, just as the legal profession contains pettifoggers, and the clerical profession hypocrites. But speaking generally, it is safe to say that doctors have been more open to knowledge and less susceptible to mysticism than any other professional class. They are very faulty, compared with the ideal physician, who never errs in a diagnosis, nor fails to restore a patient to health. But they are sages and wonder-workers when compared with the "Healers" of the Middle Ages or of the present time.

It is unfair to medical science to criticize it by cataloguing its mistakes. Of course it makes mistakes. A great part

of medical practice is pure experimentation ; but this is the only method of obtaining knowledge. The man who never makes mistakes seldom makes anything else. The great and insuperable difference between doctors and faith-healers is that the former have their faces turned towards science, and the latter have their faces turned towards superstition.

More than this, the greatest mistakes of medical science have been made by accepting the dogmas of metaphysics and theology. For instance, physicians were misled for centuries by the mystical doctrine of "signatures." This theory is ascribed to Paracelsus, but it is probable that it was a development of the theory of "correspondences" taught by Origen. In plain everyday language, it meant that every mineral, plant, tree, animal, &c., was made for some good purpose, and that God had put a mark or sign upon every-

thing so that man would at once know its use. The whole earth was thus a pharmacy, and man had but to properly interpret the name on each package.


There is not an atom of truth in this theory, but it delighted the medieval mind. It is the natural deduction from the theory of an anthropomorphic deity and a perfect universe, created especially for human beings. In the Middle Ages, as Eggleston has observed, "theories were accepted for poetic rather than scientific reasons." Conclusions were proved by symbolism and analogy. This impressed the susceptible imagination of the age, which had usurped the place of reason. A mere coincidence was to such injudicial minds more credible as evidence than statistics.

According to the law of "signatures," therefore, blood-root was good for the blood; bear's grease was good for baldness; toad-powder cured eruptions; a

wild-cat's skin stopped pain ; saffron and milk cured jaundice ; tea made from pine cones cured wrinkles ; fangs of wolves, strung around the neck, cured timidity ; a necklace of dead caterpillars cured ague ; kidney-beans cured kidney trouble ; cherry-stones cured gravel ; &c.

Even stranger remedies than these were used in the seventeenth century, when the religious metaphysicians dominated medical science. One favorite remedy was moss from a dead man's skull. A nauseating mixture called "Venice treacle" was supposed to be a panacea, as it contained sixty ingredients. Bezoar stones, found in the intestines of animals, were supposed to have great medicinal value. Spider-web pills and pulverized grasshoppers were also said to be very efficacious.

Possibly the most irrational of all medieval remedies was the "sympathetic powder" which was used for wounds and



bruises. It was not applied to the injured part of the body, but to the *weapon* with which the blow was struck. A more preposterous performance can scarcely be imagined, yet it was solemnly approved by the learned Doctors of Divinity and the metaphysicians of the time.

The medieval idea of medicine was that it must bear some grotesque analogy to the disease, and that it must be as unpleasant as possible to the patient. Castor oil is nectar compared with the decoctions that were prepared when the mystics were the guardians of health.

One of the commonest ingredients was saliva, for the use of which they quoted a Biblical precedent. The blood of frogs and rats; powdered vermin; livers of toads; and other things of unspeakable repugnance were found in the *materia medica* of the doctors who followed faith instead of reason.

Consequently, medical science went

limping for centuries. As long as public opinion regarded it as an annex to religion, it could make no headway. Its progress has increased in proportion to its emancipation from the mystical spirit. The art of healing and preventing disease never was so low as when faith was in the ascendant; and it never was more promising than at present, when all the restrictions are removed.

The nauseous draughts that were given by the doctors of the last generation, and the habit of "giving a man a quart when he could only hold a pint," as Dr. George F. Shrady has said, were survivals of medievalism, not products of medical science. The idea that "like cures like," or vice versa, which is made so prominent in the homeopathic school of medicine, is also a survival of the grotesque "Signaturism" of Paracelsus, perpetuated to the detriment of medical progress.

This fact is undeniable,—that medical



science was never so imperfect as during the Middle Ages, when it was made subordinate to faith-healing and entirely controlled by mystics. What was called medical "knowledge," from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, was a blending of astrology, superstition and kitchen physic.

When the medical faculty of Paris, which was the most celebrated in Europe, was asked during the fourteenth century to give their opinion regarding the cause and cure of the Black Plague, they produced a most remarkable document. Part of it is as follows: "We, the Members of the College of Physicians of Paris, declare as follows: It is known that in India and the vicinity of the Great Sea, the constellations which combated the rays of the sun, and the warmth of the heavenly fire, exerted their power especially against that sea, and struggled violently with its waters. The vapors

which originated rose and fell alternately for twenty-eight days ; but, at last, sun and fire acted so powerfully upon the sea that they attracted a great portion of it to themselves ; and thereby the waters were in some parts so corrupted that the fish which they contained died. This vapor has spread itself through the air in many places on earth, and enveloped them in fog.

“ We are of opinion that the constellations, with the aid of nature, strive by virtue of their divine might, to protect and heal the human race ; and to this end, in union with the rays of the sun, acting through the power of fire, endeavor to break through the mist. Accordingly, within the next ten days, this mist will be converted into an evil-smelling deleterious rain, whereby the air will be much purified.

“ Now, as soon as this rain shall announce itself, by thunder or hail, everyone of you should protect himself from

the air. Kindle large fires of vinewood, green laurel, or other green wood. . . . Poultry and water-fowl, young pork, old beef, and fat meat in general should not be eaten. Broth should be taken, seasoned with ground pepper, ginger and cloves. Sleep in the daytime is detrimental. Cold, moist, watery food is in general prejudicial. Too much exercise is hurtful. Fat people should not sleep in the sunshine. Olive oil as an article of food is fatal. Equally injurious are fasting, anxiety of mind, anger and immoderate drinking. Bathing is injurious. Men should preserve chastity as they value their lives."

The above is an exquisite example of science in a mystical age. The Black Plague was caused by a battle between the sun and the ocean! It is to be prevented by drinking broth flavored with ground pepper, ginger and cloves! And fat people must beware of sunshine! Is

it any wonder that 25,000,000 people died of the plague? Such are the fruits of mysticism, in its relation to health and the prevention of disease.

It is a common sneer among faith-healers to say that in American cities there is a drug-store or a saloon on every corner. No doubt a less artificial and better organized civilization will reduce both of these very greatly, but it must be remembered that the modern drug-store has become a new and very convenient institution. It is not at all like the apothecaries' shops of fifty years ago. The up-to-date drug-store is an information bureau, telephone office, soda-water saloon, cigar store, fancy goods store, and branch post-office. Its drug department is growing relatively smaller every year.

There is in Pilgrim St., Newcastle, England, a drug-store that is three hundred years old. It is fitted up with all

modern conveniences, but still contains in one corner the alembics, retorts, &c., that were in use in the year 1600. These ancient vessels are chiefly such as were used by astrologists, and are decorated with mysterious suns, moons and stars. They are very emphatic reminders of the great progress that has been made in the drug business.

So the modern drug-store is not, like the Mental Healer, a relic of medievalism. It is an integral part of our civilization. It is evolving and keeping pace with the march of thought and invention. As sanitary and physiological knowledge becomes general, the drug shelves will be fewer, and the soap shelves more numerous. At present the drug-store affords an example of polite and accurate service which other stores would do well to emulate.

The attack made upon medical science by "Healers" is thus most flagrantly

unjust. During the past twenty centuries it has been just such men as these mystical "healers" who have made progress in medical science almost impossible. As Andrew Dickson White has said: "Belief in miracles has been for twenty centuries the main stumbling-block in the path of medicine." What has been called "pastoral medicine" was all through the Middle Ages the bitterest enemy that medical science had to overcome.

Every step of the way from miracles to medicine, from fetichism to hygiene, has been blocked by the faith-healers and ecclesiastics. For 1500 years, doctors, like actors, were regarded as moral outcasts. They were called sorcerers, magicians, atheists. They were not allowed to dissect human bodies until the middle of the eighteenth century.

For centuries there were no skilled doctors in Europe except Arabians and

Jews ; and seven church Councils forbade Christians to consult "infidel" doctors. "Better die with Christ than be healed by an infidel," said one of the Bishops. In 1200 all physicians were forbidden by the Lateran Council to treat patients without first calling in the priest. The Dominicans, a few years later, prohibited the circulation of medical treatises.

Acquinas, one of the mystical saints of the "ages of faith," taught that the forces of the body are independent of its physical organism ; hence he deduced the dogma that all study of the body was unnecessary and sinful. Disease was a matter of belief, he maintained, using almost the same phrases as Mrs. Eddy.

Persecutions of almost unspeakable ferocity were endured by the pioneers of medical and sanitary science. In 1591, a lady of rank, Eufame Macalyane, was burned alive in Edinburgh by the ecclesiastics for using artificial means to deaden

the pangs of child-birth. Even in the nineteenth century, the use of cocaine, ether and chloroform were denounced as inventions of the devil; and orthodox believers were ordered to suffer pain, no matter how severe, rather than seek relief by such "ungodly" expedients.

Vesalius, a courageous Italian surgeon, and the founder of the science of anatomy, was persecuted and hampered by faith-curists at every turn. He was obliged to obtain bodies from charnel-houses, and was hounded from town to town as a moral pariah. It was the universal Christian belief until the nineteenth century that every man had a rib lacking on one side, as the Bible story declared that the Creator had taken one from Adam to make Eve with. It was also generally believed that there was in every human body a "resurrection bone,"—an indestructible nucleus around which the resurrection body would be formed. This was one of the cardinal doctrines of the church.

Consequently, the religionists did not want their faith shaken by investigation. As a Sunday School boy once aptly said : " Faith means believing what you know ain't true ;" and the anatomists were therefore denounced as heretics from the pulpits of Europe. They were refused permission to dissect dead bodies on the extraordinary ground that " the church forbids the shedding of blood."

History is dumb as to the number of anatomists who fought and failed. The failures that precede success are seldom recorded. But Vesalius, one of the most dauntless men of his age, fought and won. He explored the human body from head to toe, and found no " resurrection bone" nor lack of ribs. After the publication of his book in 1763, the religionists prepared to drop their two preposterous doctrines, and reconcile their creeds to the new discoveries.

The pioneers of sanitation and hygiene met the same stupid opposition from the

champions of faith. "Vain is the help of man," said the clergy to those who first attempted to clean the streets of the cities. Edinburgh was cleaned for the first time in 1585, in spite of vigorous opposition from those who said, in the words of the modern Mental Scientist, "sanitary precautions will not help you."

There has always been a close connection between mysticism and filth. This was seen in its most extreme form in the monasteries and nunneries of the Middle Ages; but in the most "refined" mystical cults of to-day there is the same neglect of *public* cleanliness as there was formerly of private. African explorers have never discovered more unclean savages than the medieval saints. The Hottentot and the Papuan are unclean through ignorance or necessity, but the consistent mystics of the twelfth century preached and practised a gospel of dirt. "The fouler the body, the purer the

soul," was their insane creed. Again and again their swinish habits caused plagues to sweep across Europe. In many monasteries bathing was entirely prohibited, as a "heathenish custom."

St. Anthony washed his feet. St. Abraham washed neither hands nor feet. St. Simon Stylites lived in unspeakable filth. Another saint made it his self-righteous boast that he had not seen his own body for thirty years. On the approach of cholera or an epidemic, the "spiritual" classes at once proclaimed a general fast and prayer-meeting. The miserable people who obeyed them were thus weakened by hunger and terrorized by superstitious fears, so that sickness found them an easy prey and swept away thousands.

This idiocy was not finally stopped until Lord Palmerston, in 1853, administered a severe rebuke to the Scotch clergy. When he was asked by them to

appoint a national day of prayer and fasting to ward off the cholera, he replied that they would be far better occupied if they cleaned up their streets and attended to the drainage of their cities. The neglect of these practical civic duties, he said, would "infallibly breed pestilence, and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united, but inactive nation."

Sanitary reformers have proved that one Colonel Waring will do more for the health of a city than 10,000 Healers. For instance, in 1675 the death-rate in London was 80 per 1,000; to-day it is about 19. Sanitary rules have lowered the death-rate in the British army from 17 to 8 per 1,000; in the East Indian army from 69 to 14 per 1,000; in the German army to 5; and in the English charity schools from 12 to 3. In France the average life has been lengthened from 23 in 1800 to nearly 38 in 1865, by the

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adoption of sanitary measures and the decrease of faith-curism. In short, sanitation has done more in fifty years to prolong life than theological subtleties could accomplish in eighteen centuries.

Inch by inch the clergy have yielded, until to-day there are health columns in the religious papers; and the motto "Cleanliness is next to godliness" can be seen hanging in the Sunday School class-room. No opposition to sanitation and hygiene comes from the orthodox churches; but only from the Christian Scientists and Mental Scientists, showing that they are the modern representatives of St. Anthony and St. Abraham.

The alienist has also had to fight and suffer to rescue the insane from the cruel guardianship of the mystic. For 1700 years the universal Christian belief was that the insane were "possessed of devils." This doctrine was abundantly proved by the Bible, and it was held that to doubt

demoniacal possession was to overthrow the entire structure of Christian doctrine.

With the sole exception of those accused of witchcraft, no unfortunate beings suffered so much savage ill-treatment during the Middle Ages as did the insane. They were "exorcised" by being kept awake for a week or more, by being cursed in the most elaborate theological blasphemy ever devised; and by being compelled to drink the most nauseating and disgusting compounds. While the Turks and Arabs had asylums for the demented, and treated them with particular gentleness, the medieval Christians chained their insane relatives in loathsome dungeons, and tortured and beat them with a brutality that the twentieth century cannot understand.

These atrocities inevitably sprang out of their belief. They held that every insane person had a devil inside, who must be forced or frightened out; so their torture was a sort of grotesque and in-

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verted regard for the welfare of their victim. The Jesuits of Vienna, in 1583, boasted that they had cast out no less than 12,652 devils. It was believed that devils were more plentiful than microbes, and far more insidious. Paracelsus, one of the medieval "new thought" philosophers, maintained that the air was so full of devils that you could not put a hair between them.

In 1729, a few German scientists, aided very greatly by Emperor Joseph II of Austria, demonstrated that insanity was a disease of the brain. One particular case which did much to attract public attention was that of a woman, who had been "exorcised" in every possible way by the priests, and who was found by the scientists to have chronic meningitis.

Sixty-three years later Pinel first introduced kindness as a remedy for lunacy in a French asylum, with such unexpected and wonderful results that the

“devil-chasers” were silenced. Tuke, about the same time did the same valuable work in England; and to-day the doctrine of demoniacal possession is found only among the converts of Chinese and African missions, who are too logical to understand the higher criticism of Europe and America. The simple truth that madness is a disease of the brain, taught by Hippocrates 2350 years ago, has at last overcome the mysticism and spiritism that concealed or denied it.

The value of oral suggestion in the cure of disease is not overlooked by medical science. For thirty years or more the leading medical colleges of Europe and America have recognized its usefulness in dealing with a certain class of patients. Every physician knows that it is best to keep a patient cheerful and encouraged. Hypnotism is largely used by doctors, both in surgical practice, and to check injurious mental habits. It is now

established beyond doubt that cigarette smoking, kleptomania, &c., can be cured by hypnotic treatment.

But the physician uses these powers of mind only when he has rational grounds for doing so. He knows that in some cases a drug will do more than oral suggestion, and that in other cases oral suggestion will do more than a drug. The modern successful physician is an eclectic. He is not the automaton of any school. He studies all sorts of remedies and human nature most of all. He acquaints himself with all the influences, mental and social material, that make for health. He is a confidential adviser more than a writer of prescriptions,— a non-religious father-confessor to whom we acknowledge our mistakes, and receive absolution in the form of medicine or advice.

While, therefore, medical science is far from being perfect, it can never be

criticized from the standpoint of mysticism or faith. Its faults are mainly caused by economic pressure, and this affects the other professions much more. No professional class does as much free work as the medical fraternity. When the Millennium of medicine arrives, and doctors are salaried city officials, each entrusted with the care of all the people in a ward or precinct, the health problem will be satisfactorily solved. The doctor will then have no temptation to encourage and prolong sickness for the sake of the fee, but will be allowed to work under a system which makes the interests of his patients and himself identical.

The greatest danger which confronts medical science at the commencement of the twentieth century comes not from the mystical sects, but from the doctors themselves. They are beginning to do as they were done by in the Middle Ages, by the formation of a Medical Trust, and

by securing the protection of its interests by the State.

They are very naturally infected with the monopolistic spirit of the times, and are endeavoring to organize on the same lines as the Standard Oil Company. Doctors are frequenting the lobbies and Committee-rooms of Legislatures, begging for laws against unlicensed practitioners. They are employing lawyers to prosecute their competitors, without making any provision for learning anything from these irregular doctors.

These violent and intolerant tactics are thoroughly medieval, and will finally serve only to bring medical science into disrepute. In the long run, medical science has nothing to fear from the unlicensed practitioner. The fittest will survive, and the protection of class interests by legislation is always followed by a reaction, which is most injurious to those who have been favored.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RATIONAL BASIS OF OPTIMISM.

IT is well to be hopeful, and to walk on the sunny side of the street, but there is a certain sort of optimistic philosophy that is nauseating to men and women who have pulled aside the veil of Isis and confronted the actual everyday facts. When we hear preachers or "new thought" prophets babbling of "God's lovely universe," it is enough to drive a sensible person to drink or to Schopenhauer.

For instance, here is a typical rhapsody from Dresser:—"Here we are in this beautiful, beautiful world. How wonderfully it is wrought! How systematically it has evolved, governed by exact

laws and animated by unvarying forces ! It is our home. We can rely upon it and on that heaven-taught instinct which guides its creatures better than the combined wisdom of all mankind. What a delight to exist ! What exceptional pleasures come to us at times among the mountains, by the winding streams, the peaceful valleys, the great ocean, inspiring awe alike in storm and calm, and ever suggestive of that Whole which unites us all ! ”

On Newspaper Row we call this sort of writing a “pipe dream.” Any young reporter can make editor’s wages spinning such easy copy at the rate of half a cent a word. Its rhythmical vacuity suggests the floating visions of the opium-joint debauchee. It is as far apart as language will permit from the carefully worded reflections of a scientific mind.

To do justice to Mr. Dresser, it should be said that on the next page he admits

having "suffered keenly and critically in the darksome vales below." But such admissions are scattered very sparingly through the pages of mystical books and magazines. The general reiteration is, "All is good," an assertion which, if words are to have any fixed value, is preposterous and untrue.

This earth is not "beautiful" or "good." Certain parts of it are beautiful, or grand or picturesque. But in every "peaceful valley" there are probably snakes and musquitoes and malaria germs. In every "winding stream" there may be leeches and sharp stones. On every mountain the wind is cruelly cold, and the great "Originator" never made a path or an elevator to get us comfortably to the top. The "inspiring ocean" is the most insatiable monster in the world, snapping with his white teeth at every boat that braves his anger, and swallowing thousands of men, women

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and children every year. "The sea is hungry to-day," say the Newfoundland fisherman when the waves roll high. If the ocean is suggestive of "that Whole which unites us all," then the "Whole," whatever he, she or it may be, is devoid of an atom of intellect or heart or purpose.

Those who have thought, not dreamed, about the ocean, regard it as the type of remorseless power. It is the implacable element which cares no more for the lives of men than it does for the pebbles that pave its shores. With the indifference of a tiger for an ant-hill, it carelessly slaps Galveston, and fills the ruined city with the dying and the dead. If Galveston had been a city of Christian Scientists, Mental Scientists, Theosophists and Spiritualists, all trusting the "higher powers" for guidance and protection, the sea would not have hurled an ounce less of water upon its victims. Such is the ocean in this "best of worlds."

Fire is another of nature's terrible forces. To say it was especially designed for man's use by an all-wise Inventor is to state what is entirely unproveable and unlikely. In the United States alone there are 25,000 fires every year, with an average destruction of property amounting to \$70,000,000. Just as the ocean is like a savage tiger, so fire is like a snake that watches its chance to strike and kill. It serves man only under compulsion, and cannot be trusted for a moment unchained. No torture gives more agony than its bite. A host of men, women and children are maimed or murdered by it every year. In every city or town we have a little standing army always on guard to protect us from its fury. It has destroyed the most precious products of human hands,—libraries, paintings, store-houses, factories, hospitals, museums and colleges.

Thousands of human beings labor and

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plan for centuries to create a comfortable city of which their nation can be proud; and fire, like an infuriated fiend, destroys in a couple of days all that their toil had created. Anyone who has witnessed a forest or prairie fire knows how swift and merciless is the "destroying element." We cannot wonder at the Parsees or the fire-worshippers of Baku for their worship of fire as a dread, ill-natured deity who must be conciliated by offerings and prayers. If fire were an animate being, there would be no doubt as to its malignancy and hatred of man. Judging it by its acts, we find that it serves him only when he makes it, and avails itself of every opportunity to drive both him and his works from the face of the earth.

The wind also is as pitiless and whimsical, so far as man is concerned, as water and fire. It pushes the steamboat, loaded with passengers, out of its course, and helps the waves to break it to pieces

upon the rocks. Does it blow half a mile an hour slower because there are philosophers, or white-haired old grandmothers, or tiny babies, or happy bridal couples on board? What did the winds and the sea care for a Byron and a Shelley? What did they care for Margaret Fuller, when they dashed her ship to pieces on Fire Island and drowned her in sight of home, with her unpublished history of the Italian revolution in her arms?

Does the razor-edged cyclone deviate an inch from its path to save the sick mother and the new-born child? Is the hot simoom a whit less scorching when it blows upon a boat's crew that is parching with thirst? Every sane man must answer "No" to all these questions. The wind blows the robin's eggs out of the nest, wrecks St. Louis, and covers the Sphynx with sand, equally indifferent to results.

The optimist whose mind reminds him

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only of his last meal, who reclines in a Morris chair on the piazza of a Florida villa, or in sunny apartments on Central Park West, with an electric button beside his chair, is undeniably sincere when he writes of "this beautiful, beautiful world." But he speaks only for himself. He has no historic consciousness nor realization of world-conditions. He is not wilfully misleading his readers, let us have charity enough to suppose. He does not know what this world is like, nor how its inhabitants live.

As he dictates to a ten dollars a week stenographer, and rings the bell for a four dollars a week bell-boy who works twelve hours a day to support a sick mother, it does not occur to him that the world has not been "beautiful" to them. He does not know that the glass out of which he sips his ice-water was made by a dying glass-blower, killed by the unhealthy conditions of his trade. He

does not know that his clothes were made in a New York sweatshop, and that little four-year old tots pulled out the bastings. He does not know that the chair he sits in was made by the *women* carpenters of Michigan, who toil among boards and shavings and whirling belts for eight dollars a week. He does not know that the paper upon which his book is printed was made in a Holyoake factory, by half-naked slaves who get ten cents an hour. He does not know, as he watches the curling smoke-wreaths, that his cigar was made by a young Jewess in the last stages of consumption; or that the match with which he lit it was dipped by a pretty young Swede girl who died shortly afterwards of "phossy jaw."

True, the optimist who writes books on "the dear sweet universe" is no more blind to these things than are the most of us who live in fine houses and touch electric bells for a living. The absolute

ignorance of the people who only *buy* things, about the conditions that prevail in the homes and shops of the people who *make* things, will be the wonder of the less stupid generations of future years.

The one-tenth who own nine-tenths of the property, because of the prevailing belief in an economic creed nearly as absurd as the "Thirty-nine Articles" or the "Westminster Confession of Faith," live in a "beautiful, beautiful world" simply because the nine-tenths who own one-tenth of the property are laboring day and night to make it so. Those who have no longer any necessity for such plebian things as hands and feet, forget that their helpless ease compels hosts of others to do double work without just remuneration.

And if the fortunate and comfortable minority forget the existence of the miserable classes in their own town and ward, how much more do they forget the

lower *nations* and tribes of the earth, whose whole life is as squalid as that of a flock of buzzards. When we write "Humanity," and spell it always with a capital H, our truth-hating imaginations always exclude the great majority of the 1,500,000,000 people whom we cannot escape calling human. We omit the four hundred million Chinese, the three hundred million Asiatic Indians, the uncounted millions of naked savages in Africa, the one hundred million peasants of Russia and Siberia, the twenty-five million illiterate laborers of South America, and nearly all the nine million negroes in this country. In fact, we include in the idea of "Humanity" generally only the two or three million people in the world who wear white shirts, collars and cuffs, and patent leather boots every day.

Thus the Mental Scientist, or religionist, or political economist who builds up

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an optimism based on the happiness of .002 of the human race, omits to state that this happiness is based upon the labor and misery of the rest, and not upon the hospitality and kindly laws of nature. He gives no credit to the real builders of civilization, who labored while he was dreaming, and for millions of years before he was born, to develop human beings from the Fuegian to the American stage of progress.

Any system of philosophy or religion which treats the human race as a finished product, or civilization as indestructible, is fallacious and misleading. The truth is,—that again and again the higher nations have been exterminated by the lower. Great civilizations have perished in Ceylon, India, Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, Persia, Morocco, Rome, Spain, Central America, Peru, the Mississippi valley and California. In every case, barbarians survived and pitched their

tents of untanned skins amid the broken walls and dust-covered ruins of proud cities that had fancied themselves immortal.

Man can create civilizations, but he cannot preserve them. He builds so much of the old into the new, that the whole structure crumbles and falls. The social problem, which some shallow-brains think can be solved by a referendum or a State law, is not a whit less than this,—how to preserve civilization from the essentially barbarous elements that surround and infest it, as well as from the destructive agencies of nature.

Nothing was “made for man.” He has had to battle with the hostile forces of nature for his food, his clothes, his shelter, his progress. He has had to place a sentinel at every corner to protect what he has acquired. Nature has tried to starve, to burn, to drown, and to freeze the whole race of men from the face of

the earth. Again and again it has destroyed nations that were the fittest to survive.

“Matter is God realizing himself in definite form,—the Spirit put in limited form so that we can grasp it,” says Dresser. To make this probable to the human reason, what a different world this would require to be! Thousands of things would have to be left out, and thousands of new things put in. Why make a sea with rocks, a forest with rattlesnakes, or a prairie with cyclones? Why have knots in trees, slag in iron, gravel in clay, and flaws in every raw material that man must use? Why have tarantulas, fleas, mosquitoes, thistles, malarial swamps, poison ivy and a thousand other inventions that endanger human life and happiness? Why such irregularities of climate? Why have the weather so cold at the ends of this globe, and so hot around the middle? Why

make Patagonia, Greenland, and northern Russia? Why not make man weather-proof in a world of atmospheric extremes? Why not make him amphibious in a world that is mostly water?

Poor old Paley wrote his "Natural Theology," endeavoring to show traces of design and kindness in nature, without having ventured an inch beyond the coast of England, and without any accurate knowledge of the physical development of any country. He likens the earth to a watch, which has not a superfluous or imperfect part; and then, mistaking his foolish analogy for argument, arraigns the Deist and the unbeliever. Neither he, nor any other theologian, takes into account the centuries of discovery, experiment and accident by which men learned how to survive in a world not suitable for their existence. The reason why men, and not horses or goats, have survived and ruled all other living

things, is not because of nature's favor, but because of human adaptability and powers of observation and reflection.

How many thousands died before men found out which were the poisons and which were the foods ! "I teach by killing, let the others learn," is nature's precept. How many centuries did men walk upon the earth's surface unwarmed, before they discovered the hidden coal underneath ; and grind stone axes before they knew of iron ! If the earth was made for man, why didn't the architect put up a few signs saying, "Dig here for coal and iron?" Why didn't he label the poison ivy, put danger signals on the coral reefs, and give us a book of directions with the cotton plant ?

Mysticism is a feeble assault upon the impregnable breast-works of modern astronomy. It is an hysterical struggle to restore the earth and man to the important positions they occupied in the

Ptolemaic scheme. The "Infinite mind" is said to have planned the entire program, arranged all cues and exits, counted the hairs of our heads, and perfected the details of every murder, assault, accident, battle and dog-fight. As Dresser says, regarding the plans and specifications of the universe, "Everything that occurs in your life and mine must have some meaning in the world-plan, for nothing could come forth at random from an infinite wisdom." Here we have the same babbling deduction that made the scholastics of the Sorbonne ridiculous even in the Middle Ages. Here is the same reasoning from a hypothetical generality to the most minute particulars, to gratify human self-conceit and re-establish the dominion of priestcraft.

So far as the individual life is concerned, we have no reason to believe that there is any plan, guidance or fore-ordination. Science and everyday experience

agree that nature cares nothing for individuals. Infinite or no infinite, there is nothing to prevent you from falling down stairs and breaking your neck ; or from being knocked into endless unconsciousness by a runaway horse.

Tennyson dares to say no more than "So runs my dream," when he writes of his hope

"That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That no one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

The Puritans believed that the Bible was a divinely inspired moral code and revelation, letter-perfect and infallible ; to-day the general belief even among the clergy, is that the Bible is an ancient human hodge-podge of myth and wisdom, out of which much good may still be extracted with care. The same change of opinion must yet take place with regard to nature. At present the discoveries of science are being used by

traditionalists to prove that the world was made to order for man. Every new hypothesis is greeted with a yell of delight by the dervish-minded "reconcilers of science and religion," who immediately announce that Paul and Origen and Habbakuk had the very same idea.

But when the dark side of the theory of evolution is popularly comprehended, when it is seen that "a thousand types are gone," and that nature is "red in tooth and claw;" when it is realized that for the individual and nation, life is but the strenuous postponement of death, the theory of design will suffer the same fate as the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

Eternal vigilance is the price of life, as well as of liberty. A single year's idleness would cause starvation among all civilized nations. The failure to educate one generation of children would wreck the oldest civilization. For in-

stance, place the son of the wisest man and woman on an island with no companionship save dogs, and when he is grown to maturity his language and his habits will be canine.

Everything that a nation has gained in five hundred laborious years may be lost by a single generation. Just as a Sevres vase may be broken in a second, and a garden which has been cultivated for a thousand years grow rank with weeds in one brief season of neglect, so a nation of thinkers, inventors, creators and explorers may dwindle in a lifetime to a few villages of superstitious peasantry. As Buckle has shown, man has seldom for any length of time conquered even the forces of nature. Much less has he been able to conquer the new forces of greed and laziness which every complex civilization has called into being.

If he had to confront only the terrible drift of all things dustward, he might

succeed and defy time for a century of centuries. But when the human brain itself abdicates its throne and co-operates with decay ; when it 'prefers "heaven-taught instinct" to "the combined wisdom of all mankind ;" when it gives the credit for all its own achievements to an infinite Nothing who bears uncounted sectarian names ; when it idealizes the ox-like vacuity of the savage mind into a Nirvana of silence and trust towards which the civilized man of the twentieth century should turn for rest ; then those who value human progress as the only thing worth while upon this tiny planet have reason to fear that all their work shall perish.

The whole worth and promise of human life depend upon whether we view it from the standpoint of man or the universe. If we approach man from the side of the Infinite, then he and all his works are transient phenomena, notice-

able at a certain brief stage of planetary development. But if we consider man from the standpoint of his own history and possibilities, he is worthy of the highest admiration and regard. Among infinite beings, man is a bug, a bee, a microbe ; among finite creatures, he is a god.

As long as man is falsely described as the pet of nature and the purpose of eternity, his own attainments will be depreciated. As long as he prizes the Aladdin's lamp of faith, he will live contentedly in a hut and wait for the genie to build the palace. Buckle, Lecky, Draper, White, Reade and Eggleston have all, by independent investigations into the law of progress, reached the conclusion that as long as man believes that any infinite or spiritual beings will be his servants and protectors, he remains an ignorant conceited savage ; and that civilization is the product of scepticism

and self-reliance. The Dark Ages were the natural product of the Ptolemaic view of the universe. As soon as it was demonstrated to be erroneous, modern civilization began. Thus we have the strange paradox, that a system of thought which professes to make man the center of all things, and the solicitude of infinite beings, as a matter of fact degrades him below the level of ordinary barbarism ; while a contrary system of thought that regards the earth as but one little planet among millions, has inspired the most glorious human achievements, and elevated nations to the highest pinnacle of culture and comfort.

Therefore it must not be thought that any paragraph in this book inculcates the feeble doctrine of pessimism and discouragement. My aim is rather that of Thoreau, who said : " I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning,

standing on the roost, if only to wake my neighbors up." My object is to place optimism upon a rational basis, so that the wayfaring man who is not a fool may accept it.

He who is blasé in America at the dawn of the twentieth century deserves banishment for ten years to China or Thibet. Never before were the words so true:—" 'Tis bliss to be alive, and glorious to be young." As long as we depend upon our reason, as long as we are Practicalists, not idealists, we can defy the hostility of nature and time, and enforce allegiance from all the elements.

Nature has surrendered to science. There is no longer any necessity for hunger and cold and illiteracy and arduous labor. We have subdued Steam and its big brother Electricity,—the two first really useful and prayer-answering gods we have ever had. We have invented machinery enough to make a six-hour

day possible. We have become rationalized into a race of magicians. Steam and electricity have given us omnipotence ; telephones, telegraphs, cables and newspapers make us omnipresent ; libraries give us a large measure of omniscience ; and railroads and steamships have given us angel's wings. Sanitary and medical science have increased the average life by about ten years ; which is certainly more to the point than speculating upon the sort of life we shall have after we are dead.

In short, the building materials for the Millennium are now on the ground ; and for the first time, as far we know, it is possible to have a Democracy that has wealth and knowledge for every one of its citizens. The problem for young Americans to solve is different from that which confronted their fathers. They have not to battle with nature, Indians, wild beasts, foreign oppression, negro slavery, or the organization of industry.

The new task is to *equalize the benefits of industrial consolidation*,—to abolish both millionaire and pauper, by making monopoly impossible save as a governmental function.

This task is one of the most stupendous ever attempted. If it is but half done, it will cause dissensions that may split the nation into East and West. If it is done so rigidly and ruthlessly that an iron industrial bureaucracy is established, public sentiment will overthrow it, as it did the State workshops of Louis Blanc in France, and we will lose a century in economic evolution. We are not so very far from industrial democracy,—at least nearer than any nation ever reached before. America has evolved far beyond the stage where “history repeats itself.” She is the first international republic. If she can so purify and elevate politics that public officials can be trusted with the management of industry, the bread-

and-butter question will be settled and poverty become as rare as cholera.

But every inch of the future has yet to be explored. This generation is the new Columbus, steering straight ahead with a mutinous crew into an unknown sea. When the two forces clash,—on one side the intelligent and the destitute, on the other the monopolists and arch-owners with their hirelings in press, pulpit, law-court and Congress,—civilization itself will hang upon the outcome of the conflict. If ever level-headedness and common sense are needed, it will be then. There will be few with strength enough to stand for civilization, and neither for the monopolists nor for the mob.

From the present outlook, it seems probable that most public men will be either corruptionists or demagogues. So tremendous will be the issues involved, so bitter the misery and wrath of the

masses and so daring the financial terrorism of the monopolists, that only a rare individual here and there will be able to bring to the task a judicial and impartial mind.

Therefore, every cult or sect that withdraws men's minds from the study of these pressing economic questions, makes for bad citizenship. This is no time for introspection and false optimism and faith and peace. The pilot who sleeps at the wheel is no more culpable than the religionists, new and old, who spend these valuable years in resurrecting Asiatic myths.

The work that Washington and Jefferson began is yet far from completion. We are still under the head of "unfinished business." There was never more demand for strong, unblemished men and women, who will dedicate their lives to social service.

"Life is real ; life is earnest : " whether

the grave is its goal or not. There are thousands of foolish and partial laws to be repealed, and half-a-dozen wise laws to be passed. There is before us the delicate and diplomatic task of transforming the industrial organizer from a private money-maker into a public servant. There are political bosses to dethrone, and their voting cattle to instruct. There are books and editorials to be written, preparing the way for a good-humored and speedy solution of these problems. There is much teaching to be done and more learning; for on the question of America's future no one can be a dogmatist. No one is more than a communicative learner on social questions.

How much grander is this real world of conflicting social tendencies than the mystical realm of phrases and aspirations! How much wiser to help your fellow-man who is by your side and needs you, than to glorify an hypothetical god who is

said to need no assistance! How much better to conserve and develop civilization, the highest concern, so far as we know, in the universe, than to cultivate the monastic spirit which made the Dark Ages dark!

Stimulants and intoxicants of all kinds, whether mental or physical, are not short-cuts to health, but to decay. The sensible man or woman dispenses alike with champagne and heaven, opium and the "subliminal self," Manhattan cocktails and the infinite. What the world needs at this juncture is plain living, clear thinking and high doing.

The next twenty-five years may prove the experiment of democracy to be a failure or a success. Until that time, at least, we can struggle on without seers, saints and mystics. To-day cloistered virtues are half crimes. America has swung out on "the open road." Europe and Asia are far behind, and our pace is

yearly increasing. Never before did men join in so glorious an adventure. We have no time to build tabernacles; we must build the road for the millions who are pressing on behind as blindly as a herd of stampeded buffaloes. If a river is left unbridged, they may rush into the waters and be swept away. If a cliff is left to obstruct the road, they may split and scatter into the wilderness. If the pioneers be few and tardy, and their work imperfectly done, then the great multitude may refuse to advance, and turn back, as Spain did, to the malarial swamps of faith.

This is the real doctrine of the strenuous life, as against the primitive swash-bucklerism that lays claim to the name. It is the strenuous life of an Ingersoll, battling against the doctrine of hell-fire and divine malignity; not the strenuous life of a Fitzsimmons or a Jeffries. It is not exemplified in the lives of Napoleon

and Grant; but rather in the careers of such civilization-builders as Darwin, Ruskin and Edison.

The call is for practical thinkers, who work for the sake of the work, and not, like monkeys, for admiration, nor like magpies for gold and silver. The unfortunate wageworkers who labor with their bodies ten hours a day have no time to think; and the leisure classes bar out of their curriculums almost all the subjects that really deserve thought and investigation. So that, in spite of six hundred colleges, America is still in need of reflective and high-principled editors, officials, statesmen and citizens. We have hundreds of thousands of patriots (far too many) of the bull-dog type,—ready to rush out and bite foreigners whenever the Government says, "Sic 'em." But we have few enough of the citizen brand,—those who will think, vote and spend money for their country's sake.

In short, instead of importing a new mysticism from the East, or reviving an old one, the task of the twentieth century is to develop citizenship into a religion. We are to be as zealous for the glory of Man as Asia has been for the glory of God. Instead of Nirvana, our aim is to be the fullness and completeness of human life,—not absorption and rest, but individuality and development. Instead of mediating on the brain-benumbing Infinite, we are to study the wonderful possibilities of nature that are within our reach. Instead of resuscitating the “subliminal self,” which is only another name for pre-rational instinct, or the lower automatic function of the mind, we are to store the memory with useful knowledge and train the intellect to be keen, quick and skillful. Instead of stimulating the emotions with highly spiced phrases, and appealing to the sense of wonder, which we share with the most degraded

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savages, we are to bring both reverence and the emotions under the domain of reason and common sense. Instead of demonstrating our humanitarianism by healing a few headaches and nervous troubles, we are to so improve the sanitation of our cities and diminish the stress and worry of business that sickness will be prevented. Instead of seeking happiness by the will-of-the-wisp path of soul-ecstasies, we are to attain it by doing some useful, congenial work which benefits others as well as ourselves.


This is the true American religion, that satisfies the brain as well as the heart, and develops both to the fullness of perfect humanhood.

CHAPTER VII.

A PLEA FOR RATIONALISM.

THESSE metaphysical cults generate a non-resisting fatalistic frame of mind in their members. There is no more serious practical objection to them than this. Men and women who have been active and useful social reformers, and who have become discouraged, seek the opium-joints of these optimistic occultisms. Their minds are befogged by vaguely altruistic phrases. They are taught that the new philosophy is infinitely higher than the step-at-a-time common sense that can only build better houses for the poor, or raise wages, or decrease the hours of labor, or elect honest men to office. They are told that they "can safely let the great world go

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on, and let nature's organism right all wrongs and heal all hurts." They forthwith remove their names from the "Tenement House Committee," or the "Municipal Ownership League," and spend their leisure evenings and Sundays attending spook-hunting seances and inspirational froth-talks. Invariably they join the retinue of some demented or knavish medium or prophet who has been blemished with a paucity of intellect and a facility of speech. They forsake the realm of action for the realm of talk. Instead of working for purer politics in their own ward, they babble about the "Divine Economy" and the "will of the All-good." Instead of doing their part in the strenuous battle that is now being fought to preserve and extend the principles of democracy, they are sitting still with the imbecile fatalism of Turkish pilgrims, leaving social and economic problems to Karma, or the "Over-Soul,"

or the "Eternal One," or some other modern substitute for Allah, Jove and Isis.

With the exception of a little hospital tent, set up at Tampa by Mrs. Tingley during the Spanish-American war, I have never known any of these "God and Brotherhood" societies to do anything definite for their less fortunate fellow-beings. And it is not unfair to say that Mrs. Tingley's philanthropy appeared to be a surrender to the war-spirit of the times and not an illustration of theosophical precepts. Her doctrine of universal brotherhood should rather have required her to set up two tents,—one in Tampa for Americans and the other in Havana for Spaniards. Her action was very significant in proving that her doctrines of an ideal humanity were all unrealized fudge, and that her patriotism was as narrow and chauvinistic as that of the daily press.

It may be accepted as a truism that to think continually of the Infinite unfits men and women for the finite. Now and then a Marcus Aurelius appears, as an exception to all rules made for ordinary men. He was both the best philosopher and best citizen in the Empire; but not one of his precepts justifies any phase of monasticism. He did not sit in a darkened room and send thought-vibrations against the northern barbarians; nor trust the "Universal Father" to build roads and drains and hospitals and orphan asylums.

It is a generally recognized fact among rationalists that the man who spends most of his time in polishing his own "soul" with sapolio has an unused bathroom and an untidy back-yard. Every practical measure for social betterment seems trivial to the devotee who thinks himself immortal and in partnership with the owner of the whole universe. Con-

sequently, the enemies of progress have always received assistance from this type of enthusiast. No tyrant is afraid of brotherhood in the abstract. No political boss is disturbed by the opposition of Mahatmas who have no votes. No monopolist relaxes his grip on the throats of the poor because he is told that "all is good." Nothing pleases the tory element of society better than the distraction of men's minds from practical to celestial themes. *Laissez faire* in business and politics is what every corruptionist and gold-baron wants. And to circulate such a doctrine in the name of progress and "new thought" is merely to bait the old ecclesiastical trap once more,—to give it a coat of varnish and set it out to catch intellectual weaklings.

Christian Science and Mental Science are systems of spiritual monism. Their central belief is—"God is all; God is good; God is mind." From the stand-

point of metaphysics, this belief is more logical than the dualism which posits a material universe governed by law, created by an infinite Being governed by nothing.

The mind naturally seeks for unity, and rebels against a dualism so inconsistent. Those who still seriously make use of those two foolish words "good" and "bad," cannot reconcile a "good" omnipotent Creator with a "bad" world. This is what theologians call "the mystery of sin." The old riddle, "Why did God make the Devil?" is one which never has been, nor can be, satisfactorily answered by orthodox dualists.

Hence, every logical mind is to-day being forced to abandon dualism. Those who are governed by reason are accepting *material* monism; and those who are governed by imagination are accepting *spiritual* monism. There is no logical standpoint between the two theories.

(Neither, of course, will ever be more than a theory.)

The opposing forces are lining up for the conflict between rational and irrational monism. On the one side, science and civilization, and on the other mysticism, evangelism, and Catholicism.

In the twelfth century, before the dawn of rationalism, it was natural that miracles and feats of magic should impress the ignorant people of the time. But the survival of the miracle-worker in the twentieth century is incomprehensible. It seems scarcely credible that the petty miracles of the Spiritualist can in these days of investigation attract any serious attention.

The "fairy tales of science" are to-day much more wonderful than the table-tipping, materializing of spirits, slate-writing, etc., which are accepted as evidences of supernatural power. The gods must do better feats than these, if they hope to

outrival Americans. These old Asiatic tricks will only deceive those who have Asiatic minds. The adepts of India, in their most brilliant moments, never thought of anything so wonderful as the phonograph, the Roentgen ray, the Hoe press, and the motion-pictures.

The French Government at one time stopped a fanatical religious outbreak in Algiers by sending Houdin, the famous juggler to outdo the miracles of the Algerian priests. An epidemic of Spiritualism in Paris was prevented by a series of exhibitions in which the tricks of the mediums were explained by public lecturers.

Gradually the dark corners of the brain are being explored. Paul Flechsig, of Leipsic, has located the organs of thought. He has placed and studied the four sense-centres, and the four association-centres or thought-centres. The latter are the real organs of mental life, and are as

much a part of the physical body as the eye and the ear.

There is no longer any scientific acceptance of the word "soul." This mystical nonentity, like the "resurrection bone," has now been labeled and shelved in the Museum of Myths. The most recent attempt to place it, comes, as might be expected, from a Boston minister. He has delivered a course of lectures to demonstrate that the seat of the soul is the *solar plexus*. So we may expect a new sect of Solarplexarians to shortly appear, with magnetic belts for instantaneous soul-development.

The experiments in psychology are also explaining the causes of hallucinations. The phenomena of "expectant attention" are being carefully studied, and show that a weak mind can be taught to supply almost every demand that is made upon it.

As Andrew Dickson White has shown, in his invaluable two volumes on "The

Conflict of Science with Theology," we have escaped from the chaos of supernaturalism into the orderly realm of science and systematic thought. The titles of some of Mr. White's chapters tell the story: "From Creation to Evolution;" "From Signs and Wonders to Astronomy;" "From Adam's Fall to Anthropology;" "From the Prince of the Power of the Air to Meteorology;" "From Magic to Chemistry and Physics;" "From Fetich to Hygiene;" "From Demoniacal Possession to Insanity;" "From Babel to Comparative Philology;" "From the Dead Sea Legends to Comparative Mythology;" "From Leviticus to Political Economy."

This unparalleled progress has been made by the unaided human brain, without prayers, fastings or slate-writings. It has been resisted every step of the way by the mystics and mediums and holy men. The Mental Scientist owes the

very clothes on his back to the "human wisdom" that he affects to despise. Without these triumphs of "mortal mind" Mrs. Eddy would be living in a cave or a wigwam and eating raw flesh without a fork. Without these achievements of "mere intellect" Annie Besant would be a second Boadicea,—the savage Queen of a savage tribe.

But it has not been my purpose to denounce mystics as perverse misleaders, or generally speaking, as quacks or commercialists. The proper name for them is intellectual babes. Mysticism is a sign of mental infancy.

The fact is, that millions of grown-up people are only three or four years old in mind. They have done no thinking on their own account. They have been spoon-fed by politicians, editors and clergy. Their infantile brains are incapable of a critical or judicial act.

Just as the baby stretches out its tiny

arms for the moon, so the intellectual babe reaches out for the infinite. The grown person knows his limitations; the child does not. The craving for "the universal," apparent in all theologians and metaphysicians, is not, as we have erroneously believed, a sign of philosophy or deep thought. It is a sign of babyhood or childhood.

The childish mind abhors doubt. It craves for positive definitions, whether absurd or not. The most ridiculous explanation is to it better than none at all. It springs at once from two or three facts to a hypothesis of the universe. The child of five delights to show his knowledge by saying of everything—"I know who made that. It was God."

Give a child a word and he does not care whether it conveys an idea or not. His perceptive faculties and his memory constitute his mental equipment. The powers of reflection have not yet been

developed. He is not thinking, but learning. His highest source of authority is his teacher or his mother. Knowledge, to him, means to remember what he is told.

A clergyman who had the initials of two degrees affixed to his name, recently said to me: "I am considered a very good astronomer; I know the names of nearly a hundred stars." His was a case of five-year old mind. In reality, he knew no more of astronomy than a cow does of a sunset. However much we may dislike to think so, the greater part of our dialectics has been simply a sort of metaphysical Mother Goose. Many a "philosopher," honored as a profound thinker, has been a man who did not know enough about his brain to know its limitations. He has been like a precocious child, who capers about and pretends that he is going to lift the house and carry it across the road. The admir-

ing five-year olds who watch his antics are greatly impressed with his strength, and imagine that he is doing wonderful things.

The "philosopher" who offers solutions of infinite riddles, is to the man of matured mind, just such a precocious caperer. He prances here and there about the problem, talks and struts and poses, but leaves the problem just where it was when he began. But he attracts at once a large following of intellectual juveniles, who regard him as the sage for whom the world has been waiting.

The real thinker, who knows what a human brain is and what it is not, confines his attention to finite and terrestrial subjects. He acknowledges his ignorance of "ultimates" and "absolutes." He says with Haeckel, "Why trouble about this enigmatical 'thing-in-itself' when we have no means of investigating it? Let us leave the fruitless brooding

over this ideal phantom to the 'pure metaphysician.' "

The metaphysician is like the child who wants the ice-cream before the soup and meat. He wants to know the infinite before he knows the finite. He wants to know all about gods before he has solved the mystery of an oyster. He fancies, with a child's egotism and imagination, that to talk about big things makes him big. He scorns practical things, just as the child feels it to be a degradation to quit pretending that he is George Washington and run for a pound of tea to the grocery store.

Thus what would be called childish play by a mature-minded nation becomes with us a serious profession and life-work. The play is called a cult or school of thought. Churches and colleges are established in which the game is taught, and men and women and governments regard the performances with grave approval.

The only cure for all this is to grow up. When we become matured, we will "put away childish things." Prof. Marvin, the noted alienist, once said: "In dissecting human brains nothing has more thoroughly impressed me than the poverty of thinking tissue which characterizes the average cerebrum." So long as this statement can be made with truth, we may expect mystics and theologians and metaphysicians to find plenty of believers.

It is easier to feel than to think. All have emotions, but very few have thoughts. As Edward Clodd has said: "Emotionally, we are hundreds of thousands of years old; rationally, we are embryos."

We must never forget that the doctrine of evolution is not that all living things move always irresistibly upward to higher forms of life. It is no more than "the survival of the fittest." The great bulk

of the unfit remain as they are, or perish. And the conditions of life may be such that those who survive may be the lowest, morally and intellectually. So the doctrine of evolution alone gives us little ground for believing in the general progress of the human race.

The overwhelming majority of human beings still hold fast to the most absurd and irrational superstitions. Science is too recent to have affected more than a very few. Our civilization is after all the work of a handful of men and women. If New York were destroyed, how few there are in it who could re-write the books in the libraries, replace the works of art, and rebuild the houses, bridges and machinery! The actual knowledge by which a great city is constructed is in very few heads. Once the city is made, of course any sort of degenerates can live in its houses, work in its offices, touch electric buttons and ride in trolley cars.

The greater the division of labor, the less brains the individual worker requires to earn his living. It is possible for us to have cities and factories that will be the wonder of the world, and yet have sixty per cent. of our citizens as superstitious as Malays.

Therefore the few who are emancipated from the fears and raptures of mysticism must not be deceived by their recent triumphs. The great majority of mankind are still practically untouched by the progress of knowledge, like the foraminifera that persist in the ocean depths. Hitherto science has meant more comfort and entertainment to the mass of our people ; therefore they have made it welcome. Its cordial reception has not been because of a universal appreciation of knowledge, but because of the nickles it threw to the crowd.

The tremendous task of teaching men and women to think for themselves has

been scarcely begun. All but our very cleverest people are the creatures of a school of thought or belong to some intellectual herd. Fearless, independent, tolerant thought is still as rare as science was in the fifteenth century.

As long as the roots of credulity remain in human nature, and that will be for many generations, there will be again and again the growth of the poison-ivy of mysticism.

Our unparalleled progress in industry and science has led us to believe that a corresponding advance has been made in religious belief. But this is very far from being the fact. Haeckel has lately declared that "It is a great mistake to suppose that the religious notions of modern civilized peoples are on a much higher level than the crude spirit-faith of primitive savages."

The difference is mainly in externals, and not in the ethical content of the

beliefs. It is undoubtedly more civilized and sanitary to have the sacramental wine passed in small individual cups than for several hundred people to sip it from two big goblets; but the moral worth or worthlessness remains the same. It is more refined to worship with a pipe-organ and male quartet than with a tom-tom and a string of cowrie shells, but the essence of the devotion may be very similar. High mass may be a more cultured method of procedure than a Cherokee sun-dance, but the net results of both ceremonies are precisely the same.

This book is not to be interpreted as opposed to the poetical and imaginative side of human nature. It merely insists that the imagination must at all times be under the control of the reason. The imagination is like fire,—it is a good servant and a bad master. I would be the last one to eliminate sentiment, romance and poetry from this grey,

humdrum world. It is to the abuse of these things that I object. When marble statues are used as foundation stones, it is high time to raise objections. Both the statues and the building will be injured by such folly.

By all means let us continue to speculate about the universe, and write verses, and play guitars, but *not as the serious work of life*. Let us have our day-dreams, but in the name of sanity let us not dignify them by the use of scientific phrases.

After the day's work is done, and you are sitting in front of your home, watching the shifting hues of the sunset, then comes the hour which belongs to the imagination. It is the unscientific, unpractical hour of the day. Then your thoughts are painted like the clouds. You remember the ideals of your youth and the friends who are scattered up and down the earth. The memory of those

who are not alive any more softens your nature, and you wonder if the old myths could be true. You think of the pleasure if only you could meet *her* or *him* once again, and be as you were long years ago.

You remember how light was the burden of life when you were a child, and lived by faith in your parents. How real was Santa Claus at Xmas time! And Jack and the Beanstalk! And the fairies! Then the stars and the moon hung low, and the rainbow touched the earth just over the hill. And you were afraid of the thunder and the lightning, and the cross dog around the corner. And every night your mother tucked you warmly in your bed, and told you there was nothing in the dark to hurt little children. And how hard to think that your mother is now but a handful of mould underneath the grass!

Such are the *sunset* reflections that come to us all. They are as inevitable

as the twilight. They soothe and refresh the relaxed mind, wearied with the responsibilities of the office or the shop. They renew our youth, and link us to the associations of the past. They preserve us from becoming Gradgrinds, having no higher thought in life than eight per cent. As long as business continues to be a fierce struggle for our private interests, these after-dinner dreams will help to keep us kindly and sympathetic and human-hearted.

But when these imaginings are offered as a substitute for science and the serious work of the day, all their glory fades and they become the stupid myths of a superstitious age. Pleasant as the sunset hour may be, no sane man or woman wants a perpetual twilight. *The work of the world must be done*, and whoever sits day-dreaming "in the silence" during the working-hours is a skulker and a loafer, nothing more. When, worse than

this, any mystical loafer develops his laziness into a money-making cult, and makes it his profession to inoculate others with the virus of indolence, he becomes a traitor to all that is worthiest in civilization. Public opinion should kill the sale of his narcotic books, and close up his seances, and drive him into some useful and honorable vocation.

The social problems, political and economic, which must be solved in the twentieth century, will require all the brains and energy and ingenuity that our nation can produce. Never before were such tremendous wide-reaching forces in existence. Our social question is almost identical with the scholastic riddle—"What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable rock?" The work ahead of us needs level-headed people. We want no mystics on the job.

As Buckle says, in an earnest appeal for rationalism. "Now, more than ever,

do we want true and genuine men. No previous age has had so much work to do, and, to accomplish that work, we need robust and vigorous natures. Never before, was the practice of life so arduous ; never were the problems presented to the human mind so numerous, or so complicated. Every addition to our knowledge, every fresh idea, opens up new difficulties, and gives birth to new combinations.

“Under this accumulated pressure we shall assuredly sink, if we imitate the credulity of our forefathers, who allowed their energies to be cramped and weakened by those pernicious notions which the clergy, partly from ignorance and partly from interest, have in every age palmed off on the people, and have thereby diminished the national happiness, and retarded the march of national prosperity.”

It is generally an unfortunate thing for

the world when a strong-willed man or woman appears who has more moral earnestness than intellect. The result is either a new mysticism, or the awakening of the latent superstitions of orthodoxy. In the past fifty years, *foreign missions* gave an outlet to such people. The crusades to "save" the heathen, as intellectual efforts, have been on a par with the crusades of Peter the Hermit to capture the "Holy Sepulchre." But they provided a moral enthusiasm which swept thousands of zealots into the missionary army, and millions of dollars into their treasury.

Many intelligent people have hitherto contributed generously to the support of foreign missions, not because of any help it ever gave to the heathen, but because it exported a large number of objectionable fanatics. It was a kind of safety-valve, preventing explosions of medieval religion. It distracted the attention of

religionists from home affairs, and so preserved us from epidemics of Blue Laws, and crusades to put God into the Constitution.

However, as the recent troubles in China have shown, it does not pay in the long run to build up an export trade in mystics and fanatics. They are too likely to create international complications, and involve their nations in disastrous wars. The exposures, also, that have been made of missionary tactics, and the increasing appreciation of foreign civilizations, have rendered it improbable that foreign missions should survive much longer. The spirit of malice and commercialism shown by the missionaries in China has disillusioned even the Christian church-members, and a speedy collapse of the whole structure of foreign missions may be expected.

In the near future, therefore, there will be an increased danger from zealots. The

safety-valve will be fastened down. We may even expect propagandist visits from the mystics of other lands ; as the success achieved by the Swamis and Buddhists in Boston, Chicago and New York may at any time bring over a large number of these Hindoo metaphysicians.

The rapid disintegration of the Protestant churches, and the utter inadequacy of their methods to satisfy the sincere devotee, may bring upon us a carnival of credulity. Very few people in a million of our population can stand where Haeckel stands, and breathe the air of unadulterated rationalism. Dualism, even among scientific men and women, is still too prevalent to allow us to hope for much from the masses. The moral cowardice of editors, professors, authors and public men, in pretending to respect religious opinions and customs which they inwardly despise, makes success much easier for the mystical fanatic.

Science has unsettled all the ancient faiths, and the rationalizing of the masses (or classes either) has not kept pace with its discoveries. There is still a craving for a positive dogmatic religion, which explains everything. The toothless babes of faith are clamoring for the rubber rings. Those who have walked a few steps have fallen down on the hard floor, and they are crying to be put back in the cradle.

At best, we have but a kindergarten civilization; and all that this book maintains is that we should now learn to walk instead of crawl on all fours; to eat solid food; exercise our weak muscles and powers of observation; and not be afraid of the dark.

The only way in which individuals can help to avert this recrudescence of medievalism or babyhood, is by refusing to reverence all superstitions, however respectable; and by promoting the spirit

of scientific investigation. As Buckle reiterates—"The only cure for superstition is knowledge."

Hundreds of subtle minds are now at work, "reconciling science and religion." Ever since Joseph Cook showed how easy it is to transform a myth into a transcendental intuition, there have been plenty of these reconcilers. A Brooklyn man has just published an amazing book called "Electricity and Resurrection," in which he continues the endless work. Lyman Abbott has put the dismantled Bible in the dry-dock, and has done his best to fit it for a cruise through the twentieth century. Poor Sheldon has been working over-time to prove that Syrian mysticism is the solution of all our political and economic problems, with results that foretell the unfitness of orthodoxy to survive. Newell Dwight Hillis demonstrates the compatibility of culture and the Confession of Faith, and the essential unity of

thought which underlies Browning's poems and Mother Goose's nursery tales. Heber Newton, with his conversion to Mental Science, and Minot J. Savage, with his deplorable relapse into Spiritualism, prove that the religious sentiments, whether primitive or refined, are essentially the same.

If, then, among the leaders of religious thought we find a grotesque jumbling of science and superstition, Asia Minor and America, refinement and fetichism, what may we expect from the rank and file? Orthodoxy is too weak and vulnerable to put down the new sects that arise; and rationalism is too young and unpopular to overcome them.

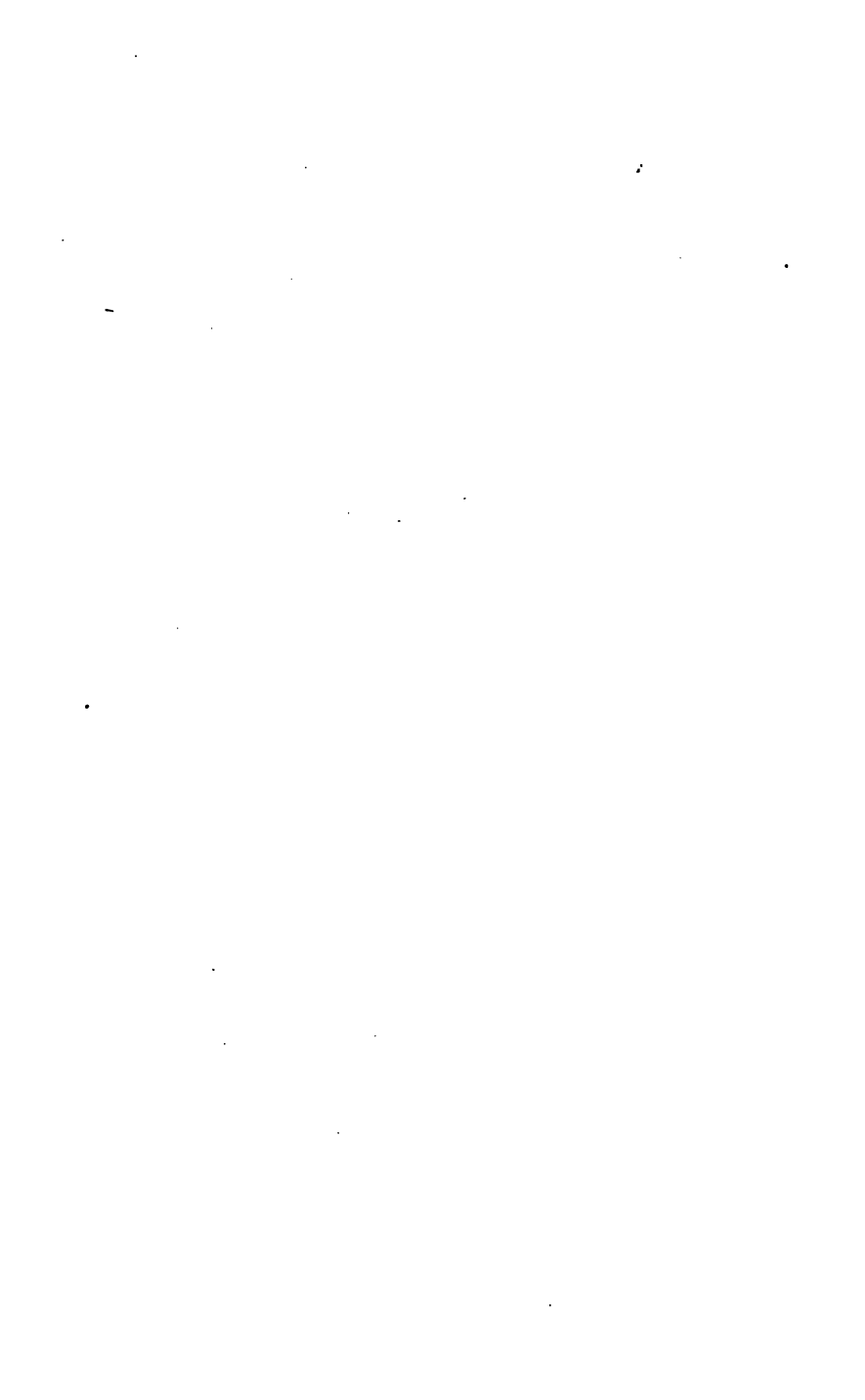
Nothing can be done save to hasten the emancipation of our intellectual peasantry, both in the factory and the college, on the farm and the lecture platform. The recrudescence of medievalism can be met only by the renaissance

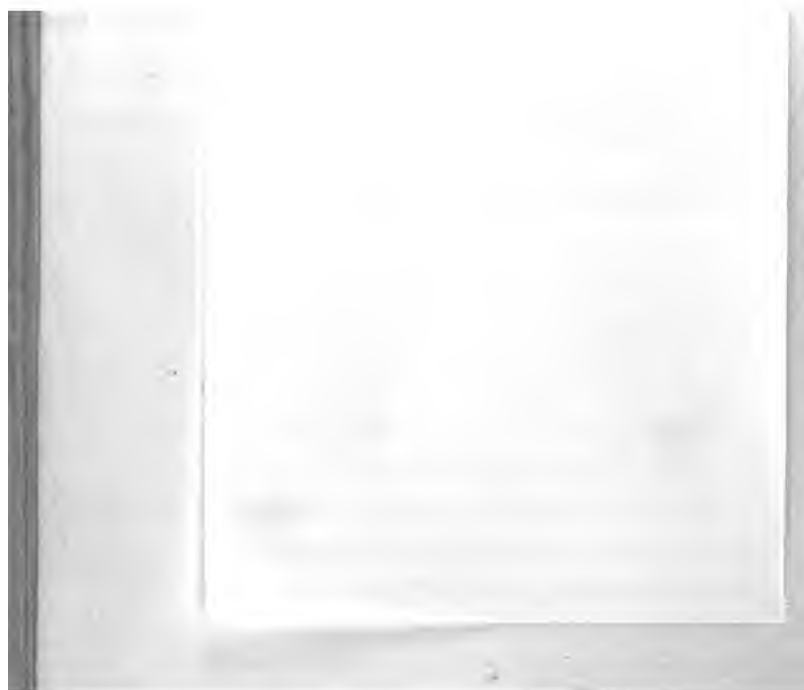
of free thought. Such books as Winwood Reade's "Martyrdom of Man," A. D. White's "Conflict of Science and Theology," Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe," and the writings of Buckle, Lecky, Draper and Ingersoll should be placed in every public library in America. The Titanic work of such rationalists as Montaigne, Voltaire, and Paine needs to be repeated, not by the parroting of their ideas, but by the emulation of their courageous, outspoken common-sense. This modern blending of myth and culture is a new enemy to intellectual progress, that must be met by new presentations of fact. *Superstition must be eliminated, not refined.*

In conclusion, to sum up the message of this book in a sentence, civilization has arrived at a point where the mystic is a menace to its permanence. What has been achieved by reason cannot be maintained by faith. In our delicately

organized, interdependent social system, the mystic, the militarist and the monopolist are as much out of place as a herd of buffaloes would be on Broadway. If the present generation allows these three outgrown types to survive, it will bequeath to the children who are now in the public schools a legacy of superstition and revolution. It is the writer's most earnest hope that these few pages may help to increase the number of clear-headed men and women, who are sensible enough to separate fact from fancy and knowledge from speculation ; to the end that our twentieth century American civilization, with all its faults the worthiest that the world has ever produced, may be preserved from every influence that would stunt its growth or sap its energies.









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